

Ōpāwaho **Lower Heathcote Guidance Plan**

2022





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The lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River embodies a living partnership between people and the awa, where activities restore and enhance te mana o te wai.

This will be achieved through:

- Recognition that the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River corridor is a taonga.
- Collaborative and cohesive activity between the community, Christchurch City Council and other organisations.
- The protection and restoration of ecology and biodiversity.
- A return to the principles of mahinga kai, where the environment mutually enhances people and the river.
- Understanding 'ki uta, ki tai', the broader effects on the river from activities and conditions in the Port Hills and areas alongside the river and estuary environments.

Foreword

This guidance plan is the result of extensive collaborative partnership and consultation between the Linwood Central Heathcote Community Board, Christchurch City Council staff, the community and organisations with an interest in the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River. The plan is a living and enduring framework to support and enhance the long-term sustainability of ecology and biodiversity in the area, reversing the damage or restoring the ecosystem after decades of degradation from a wide range of sources.

The framework established here builds on significant work and activity already under way. Identifying projects that facilitate the enduring nature of this plan would not be possible without the enormous contribution from community volunteers over many years. Similarly, the Christchurch City Council proposals for the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River, acknowledging existing ecosystem issues and flood management, and the Mahinga Kai framework developed by the Matapopore Charitable Trust, were critical in providing a policy framework for this plan.

The intent of this plan is to provide a collaborative approach to wisely manage the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River so that it is available for future generations to use and enjoy. The lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River is a taonga for the people of Ōtautahi-Christchurch, but the historical degradation and effects of human use do not reflect that.

This project has included a wide range of individuals from across the Council, community, iwi and other organisations. Thanks go out to the many members of the community and Council who have been involved at all stages of the process. Special thanks to the Elected Members of the Linwood-Central-Heathcote Community Board; Councillor Yani Johanson, who chaired the Working Party, and Tim Lindley, and community members of the working party:

- Mick Ingram
- Dugald Wilson
- John Marsh
- Malcom Long
- Rachel Barker
- Annabelle Hasselmann
- Bruce Stanton
- Tanya Jenkins
- Alisdair Hutchison
- Marie Gray



Alexandra Davids
Linwood-Central-Heathcote Community Board Chairperson



Context

The lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River is one section of the greater Ōpāwaho-Heathcote River that flows from the south-west of Christchurch to the Ihutai-Avon-Heathcote Estuary. This guidance plan covers the area from the Opawa Road Bridge to the Ferrymead Bridge at the entrance to the estuary¹.

This section of the river is culturally, historically, ecologically significant. This part of the catchment is a source of mahinga kai and a focus of historical and cultural activity².

From the mid 1800's to 1925, the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River has suffered the effects of human land use, including settlement, industrial pollution, and urban development³. It was not until 1970 that the remaining industries had their effluent directed to the sewage treatment plant.

This improved water quality in the lower river, but ongoing development and settlement in the catchment

over the past 200 years, combined with the effects of the 2010/11 earthquakes mean the catchment values remain degraded⁴.

Significant work has been done – and continues – by the community and Council to address some of the river's problems. The scale of the issues, and the time and resources needed demand a partnership approach to ensure solutions are sustainable, achievable, and will best serve those who live in and use the area.

In future this part of the river will be affected by climate change, sea-level rise and other environmental changes. The exact effects are unknown, and this highlights the importance of future planning⁵.

This guidance plan aims to be cohesive, bringing together the various efforts of the community and organisations with an interest in the health and use of the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.

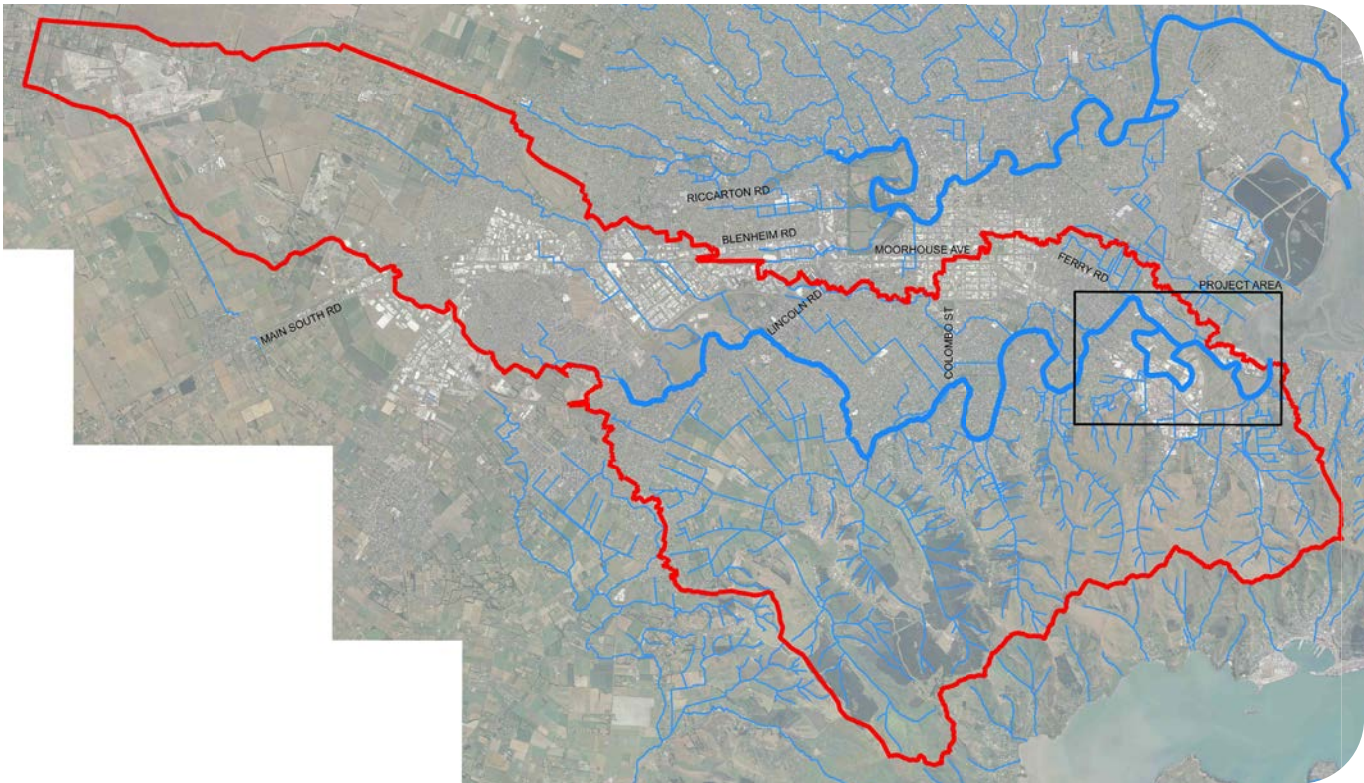


Image: Catchment Area, including area of Focus for the Project

1 Other sections are covered by existing plans, such as the Christchurch City Council's Mid-Heathcote Linear Park Masterplan and Heathcote Stormwater Management Plan, or community group plans including the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust Estuary Management Plan.
2 Ōpāwaho / Heathcote River Catchment – Tauāki Wai Pātāua Vision and Values 2016, <https://ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Environment/Water/Heathcote-River-Catchment-Vision-and-Values.pdf>
3 Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network, <https://ohrn.nz/about-the-river/#1608425521307-1d0bb0af-7472>
4 Ibid
5 NIWA – Impacts of Climate Change on Urban Infrastructure & the Built Environment, https://niwa.co.nz/sites/niwa.co.nz/files/tool_2.1.4_inundation_modelling.pdf



Background

In 2015 the community and community board identified a gap in future planning, including the lack of an integrated approach to river management. A partnership was developed between community groups and individuals and official agencies, including Environment Canterbury and community boards. In their 2016-19 and 2020-22 plan, the Waikura Linwood-Central-Heathcote Community Board identified a lack of cohesion and a desperate need to restore the condition of the river. The board set up a working party in 2020 with representatives and stakeholders to develop a plan for the river. This approach acknowledges the previous efforts that have been undertaken, such as the 1998 Heathcote River Floodplain Management Strategy. These earlier projects produced a significant body of work to support future efforts, but have not evolved over time as circumstances have changed. This guidance plan aims to build on those earlier efforts.

Expected Benefits

Through the lens of an integrated cultural framework, this plan will coordinate activities already under way, being planned, or envisaged along the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River corridor. This approach will ensure activities are aligned in a more efficient way and allow community groups and Council to share resources. It will significantly highlight a commitment to the principles of Te Mana O Te Wai⁶.

The guidance plan will establish a cohesive plan for the area's future, so that everyone working in the area understands the goal and works together to achieve it. This will enable more organisations and groups to get involved and to have a positive effect as part of a stronger community.

While the focus of this guidance plan is the coordination and integration of efforts, the key outcomes will see improvements in the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River. There will be direct and measurable environmental gains in key areas such as water quality, biodiversity and human use of the river.

How the plan will be used

This guidance plan will provide a coherent vision for all the groups who act in the area, establishing priorities and agreed actions for the future. This process will allow individual groups to understand their role in the broader plan, and for Council and other agencies to support those groups in their efforts. A cohesive overview will enable these efforts to be complementary and supportive of other activities, to be more efficient, to make better use of available resources, and to build a stronger community of interest.

The co-development of this plan, by the community board and the community, gives continuity across political geographical boundaries and electoral terms.

Who is involved?

An inclusive approach that welcomes everyone with an interest in the river will result in a better future for the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River. While there are some established community groups such as the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network, this plan of action is deliberately broad in scope to include and welcome interest from across the community.

Some of these groups of interest are:

- Christchurch City Council
- Council and Community Board Elected Members
- Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network (OHRN)
- Avon-Heathcote Ihutai Estuary Trust
- Forest and Bird
- The Laura Kent Working Group
- Kennaway Working Group
- Summit Road Society
- Ferrymead Heathcote Saltmarsh Group
- Ngāi Tūāhuriri/Matapopore
- Local residents
- Local businesses
- Recreational river and land users
- Members of the Community Waterways Partnership

The river and the history of degradation

Water quality in the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River is generally poor in comparison to other Ōtautahi-Christchurch catchments⁷. This affects the waterway's ecology, with contaminants having negative effects on the physiology and behaviour of instream biota. The worst areas for water quality are in the Curletts Stream, Ōpāwaho Heathcote River at Tunnel Road, Haytons Stream, and Ōpāwaho Heathcote River at Ferrymead Bridge⁸. The best water quality is found closest to springs, emphasising the importance of clean natural water sources.

Human land use in the late 19th and early 20th centuries resulted in significant amounts of industrial and commercial pollutants entering the river and its catchment⁹. Residential building on the Port Hills and settlement along the river's edge have increased sedimentation and reduced biodiversity, enabling invasive species to thrive.

Some wetland restoration has occurred since the 1980's and the environmental decline is being reversed. The restoration has been uneven, with efforts mainly associated with other programmes of work, such as stormwater works, rather than as part of a wider plan.

Sediment and erosion issues worsened with the Christchurch earthquakes, further affecting the river's ecology. While significant works were done, such as dredging to remove sediment, the opportunity to integrate mitigation efforts with land use and enhancement projects have not been fully exploited.

Some projects with positive intent have had unintended or unplanned side effects for the river. For example, anecdotal evidence from the community suggests that dredging and cutting or removing natural vegetation has led to some vegetation not re-establishing successfully. Similarly, there is a risk that relocating animals or river life does not guarantee their ability to establish in the new location, with the opposite effect to what was intended.

6 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

7 <https://ccc.govt.nz/environment/water/waterways/waterway-monitoring>

8 <https://ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Environment/Water/Monitoring-Reports/2019-reports/City-wide-surface-water-quality-report-2019.pdf>, page viii

9 Ōpāwaho Heathcote River – Draft Stormwater Management Plan 2021, <https://ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Consultation/2021/07-July/Heathcote-Stormwater-Management-Plan-SMP-draft-WEB-2.pdf>

Cultural Framework

This framework, developed from the Matapopore Charitable Trust Mahinga Kai framework, aims to guide and inform the design of an environment to restore the mauri (life essence) of water and land. It instils a greater sense of connection, reciprocity and responsibility between the community and the natural environment. This framework approach emphasises the interconnectedness of people and place, and recognises the reciprocal relationship between people and the places they visit, use and enjoy.

This holistic approach enables all those with an interest in the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River to play a role in enhancing and restoring the natural characteristics of the river and land. It allows consideration of multiple cultural aspects, including:

- Whanaungatanga – Social and whanau connections, community togetherness
- Mātauranga – Knowledge development, education, cultural practices and the transference of knowledge
- Kaitiakitanga – Custodianship, reciprocity, respect and environmental enhancement
- Manaakitanga – Safe, inclusive and welcoming environments, and productive landscapes
- Hauora – Physical, spiritual and mental health and well-being
- Whakapapa – identity, history and acknowledgement of tipuna
- Wairuatanga – Connection to place and to the natural environment

“A healthy river and its rich and diverse ecosystem will bring an abundance of diversity in birds, vegetation, insects, fish and other in-stream forms of life. A healthy river could again be the central location for whanau activities, play, swimming and resource gathering.”

– Matapopore Charitable Trust, Mahinga Kai framework

Whanaungatanga

The relationships and social connections that foster community togetherness, and social wellbeing. It is the principle which binds people together, with a sense of unity, belonging and cohesion.

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Public meeting spaces
 - Identify and enhance places where small groups can meet or relax
- Community group spaces
 - Identify and develop places where community groups can congregate for gatherings and activities



Mātauranga

Indigenous systems of knowledge arising from a worldview based on kinship relationships between people and the natural world. Humans are not seen as superior to the natural order but as existing within it.

In this plan it describes activities along the river that provide for knowledge development, education, cultural practices, and the transfer of knowledge.

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Education for tomorrow
 - Partner with places of learning such as schools and universities to create opportunities for education now to benefit the future
- Use and support the Community Waterways Partnership
- Disseminate information to increase public knowledge of activities and events affecting the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Support for science
- Facilitate scientific work that supports the guidance plan vision
- Observation spaces
- Establish places from which to observe the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Ecological sites
- Establish ecological sites now, for the future



Kaitiakitanga

Guardianship or stewardship, taking a holistic view of caring for the environment. The focus is not on ownership and it is concerned with environmental sustainability and beneficial use.

In this plan, Kaitiakitanga describes activity that restores and enhances the natural environment.

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Biodiversity
 - Support the sustainable existence of life, including through the restoration of habitats and vegetation
 - Monitor and control invasive species, animals and predators
- Water quality
 - Work to improve or sustain water quality alongside the Community Waterways Partnership
- Integrated approach to pollution
 - Cohesive and integrated solutions to reduce pollution, waste and rubbish



Manaakitanga

The way people demonstrate respect, care and consideration of each other. It is about uplifting the personal mana of others by practising care, courtesy and consideration. Acts of Manaaki contribute to open and positive environments to work and learn in.

In this plan Manaakitanga refers to safe, inclusive and welcoming environments, and productive landscapes.

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Increase interaction
 - Develop positive messaging for visitors, including signs and murals, aligned with the Community Waterways Partnership
- Improve land use
 - Identify opportunities to improve the use of private and public land in and adjacent to the lower Ōpāwaho Heathcote River
- Improve public access
 - Where appropriate, improve visitor access
 - Identify, protect and constrain access to sites of ecological significance



Hauora

A holistic way of viewing health and wellbeing that is unique to New Zealand.

In this plan Hauora refers to physical, spiritual and mental health and wellbeing, including environments which encourage physical activity, and promoting natural health such as natural medicine practices

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Improve play areas
 - Create or maintain places to play and explore
- Mahinga kai
 - Appropriately manage resources and the associated knowledge, including identifying reserve spaces or activity zones
- Recreation spaces
 - Develop places for recreation, including launch locations, bike and walking trails



Whakapapa

A framework that links all animate and inanimate, known and unknown phenomena in the physical and spiritual worlds. It maps the relationships that bind all things.

In this plan whakapapa refers to identity, history and acknowledgement of tīpuna (ancestors)

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Storytelling
 - Share information with the community about heritage, historical land use and mythology
- Historical sites
 - Identify and develop historical sites of importance
- Design framework
 - Cohesive design elements across activities, events and displays



Wairuatanga

The distinctive identity or spirituality of people and places. It contributes to a sense of belonging and connects Māori heritage with its contemporary context.

In this plan wairuatanga refers to connection to place and the natural environment, and the acknowledgement and protection of mauri (life essence).

Key themes that the plan addresses:

- Connections
 - Create logical and cohesive connections between spaces
- Character spaces
 - Support the development of unique or character spaces
- Relaxation spaces
 - Create quiet spaces for relaxation and reflection by removing or reducing external interference including the impact of traffic and/or technology
- Emphasise the natural environment
 - Use best practice designs for lighting, structures and other improvements to support local birds and wildlife



Lower Ōpāwaho River – Landscape types

The vision for this guidance plan is to restore the partnership between people and the river, where activities restore and enhance the river’s health and status. All proposals in the plan work towards this aim.

In order to achieve the vision, there needs to be a clear understanding of the existing river environment. Areas that have similar characteristics have been identified and summarised as a set of landscape types, with different landscape treatments determined for each landscape type, to guide the restoration activities for each section of the river.

Locations for human activity have been identified at key points along the river. By setting aside spaces for people in specific areas, the remainder of the river corridor can be planted and left undisturbed for wildlife.

The key aspirations of the plan are summarised below, with further details of how these can be achieved on the following pages.

1. Prioritise the natural environment;	<p>As reflected in the aspirations above increasing the opportunities for undisturbed native, riparian planting is a key goal of the guidance plan. The benefits of this type of planting are extensive and include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provision of habitat for birds and fish;2. Identification and support for inanga spawning habitats;3. Greater numbers of birds and fish in the river as a result of the extra habitat;4. Reduction in sediment entering the river;5. Reduction in contaminants entering the river;6. Increases bank stability and reduces erosion;7. Reduction in weed species because it’s harder for them to get established;8. Increases people’s access to nature which is good for our health and well-being. <p>These benefits are taken into account throughout the proposed typology treatments and projects which follow.</p>
2. Increase space available for the river margin;	
3. Intensify native planting and reduce the volume of lawn;	
4. Reduce exotic trees and intensify native tree canopy;	
5. Increase shading of the river;	
6. Provide habitat for native fauna;	
7. Create a place of education;	
8. Improve connectivity to the river and between activities;	
9. Enhance social connections.	

Landscape type 1

The river bank is next to a residential road with a narrow 2 to 3 metre river edge with steep banks. No footpath is provided for pedestrians and the area is dominated by exotic grass and trees.

Issues:

- Grass needs mowing which disturbs wildlife, removes habitat and encourages weed growth;
- It doesn’t contribute to the biodiversity of the river;
- It has limited sediment and stormwater filtering capacity;
- Narrow, steep banks limit space for riparian planting;
- Shading of the water is limited to that provided by exotic trees.

Proposed treatment

Maximise space for riparian planting by:

- a. Planting as close as possible to the road verge;
- b. Reshaping the banks where possible, with additional stabilising support where required;
- c. Reducing areas of exotic grass;
- d. Not providing pedestrian access on the river bank.

Increase shading of the river through:

- a. overhanging plants along the river edge;
- b. Increasing native tree canopy cover as part of a succession plan to phase out exotic tree species, noting the correlation between mature trees and bank stability;
- c. Ensuring riparian planting follows best practice guidelines.

Reduce traffic alongside the river by:

- a. Making roads more pedestrian friendly and looking for opportunities to narrow the roads and reduce speeds as they come up for renewal;
- b. Increasing planting up to the road edge to reduce parking on the river bank;
- c. Installing low bollards where necessary to reduce parking on the river bank.

Retain viewing points to and over the river by having a mixture of low and tall planting along the river bank.



Landscape type 2

The river is next to a residential road, with a wide river bank, primarily planted in exotic grass. The bank provides space for parking, pedestrians and recreation activities along the river's edge. There is a mixture of native trees and shrubs and exotic tree species. The pockets of native vegetation are successful and contribute to the biodiversity of the river.

Issues:

- Grass needs mowing which disturbs wildlife, removes habitat and encourages weed growth;
- Grass doesn't contribute to the biodiversity of the river;
- Areas of grass have limited sediment and stormwater filtering capacity
- The wide areas of grass make it easy to park vehicles on the river bank;
- The long stretches of grass allow more human activity which increases the disturbance of wildlife;
- River banks in this area are marginally unstable and are slowly subsiding;
- Shading of the water is limited to that provided by exotic trees and the pockets of native vegetation.

Proposed treatment

Maximise space for riparian planting by:

- a. Planting as close as possible to the road verge;
- b. Reshaping the banks where possible;
- c. Reducing areas of exotic grass.

Increase shading of the river through:

- a. Overhanging plants along the river edge;
- b. Increasing native tree canopy cover as part of a succession plan to phase out exotic tree species;
- c. Ensuring riparian planting follows best practice guidelines.

Reduce traffic along the river by:

- a. Making roads more pedestrian friendly and looking for opportunities to narrow the roads and reduce speeds as they come up for renewal;
- b. Planting up to the road edge to reduce parking on the river bank;
- c. Installing low bollards where necessary to reduce parking on the river bank.

Provide space for people and pedestrians by:

- a. Creating a gravel path to provide a naturalised bush walk experience through the planted areas;
- b. Ensuring natural and introduced paths are safe for users;
- c. Leaving some open areas of grass with seats or picnic tables to enable recreation activities at key points along the river;
- d. Retaining viewing points to and over the river by having a mixture of low and tall planting along the river bank.



Landscape type 3

The river is bordered by large, open areas of exotic grass lined with exotic specimen trees. The river has a concrete channel edge with concrete steps providing access to the water, and there is a wide pedestrian path along the bank. The area is bordered primarily by residential properties and a school.

Issues:

- A hard concrete edge to the river
- Large trees are all exotic species

Proposed treatment

Maximise space for riparian planting by:

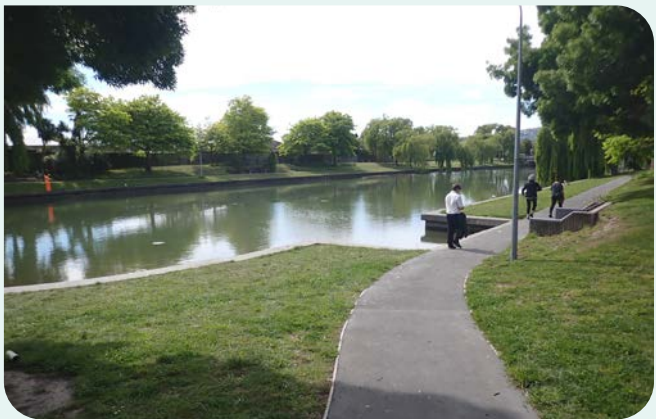
- a. Reducing the extent of lawn to prioritise larger areas of native planting.

Enhance the estuarine mudflat habitat used by native birds by:

- a. Creating a naturalised edge to the river which could be achieved by removing one or two sets of concrete steps and replacing with a planted bank;
- b. Planting indigenous marsh vegetation;
- c. Providing instream habitat features.

Provide space for people and pedestrians by:

- a. Retaining some areas of open lawn where practical, as required by the community;
- b. Retaining some steps for access to the water for users such as kayakers; those accessing the kayak slalom course and maintenance teams;
- c. Retaining a path through this area;
- d. Maintaining clear sight lines between residential properties, schools and commercial activities.



Landscape type 4

Existing walkways along the river that need enhancement.

Issues:

- River banks are slumping in some places.
- Gaps have arisen since planting was carried out some years ago.
- Harsh lines caused by fences of neighbouring properties.
- Tracks need resurfacing and re-aligning in places.

Proposed treatment

Maximise space for riparian planting by:

- a. Reshaping the banks where possible;
- b. Reducing areas of exotic grass;
- c. Re-routing the path where possible to increase opportunities for planting.

Reduce the visual impact of neighbouring properties where appropriate by:

- a. Working with neighbours to develop mutually beneficial enhancements;
- b. Planting taller plant species along fence lines;
- c. Installing artworks or murals;

Provide space for people and pedestrians by:

- a. Improving the track surface and/or width of track as required;
- b. Retaining sight lines and highlighting exit points from the tracks.



Landscape type 5

Areas of existing dense planting and good riparian planting.

Issues:

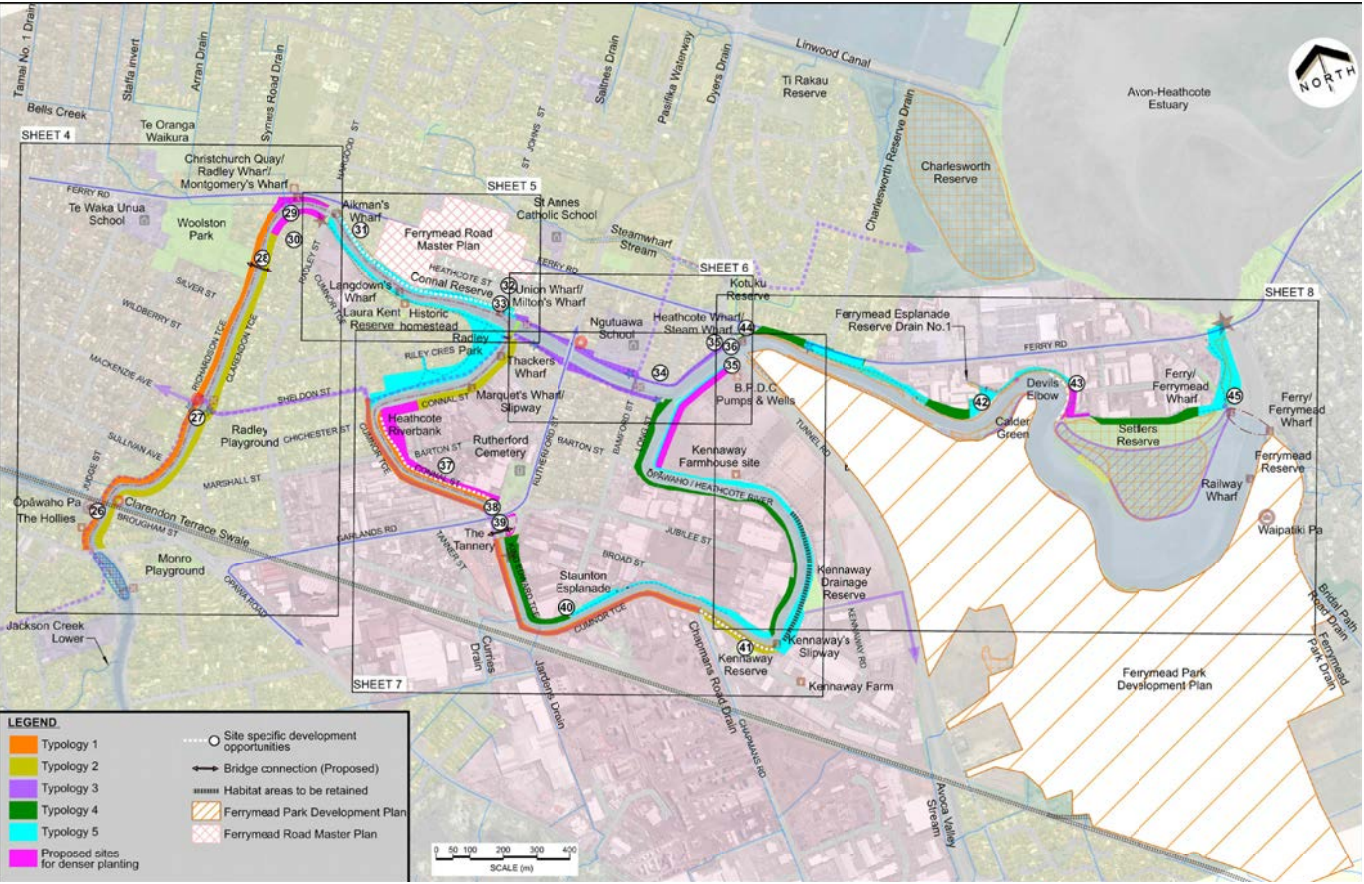
- Gaps have arisen since planting was carried out some years ago.

Proposed treatment

Infill planting as required to retain existing density and quality.



Place Based Actions



Actions Across the Whole River Corridor (not site-specific)

Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Create a coherent story for the river			
<i>Whakapapa: Storytelling links the physical and spiritual worlds.</i>			
<i>Whanaungatanga: Encouraging social connection in the community, including a sense of belonging to the area.</i>			
<i>Mātauranga: Increasing the knowledge and understanding of people who use the river and its environment.</i>			
<i>Manaakitanga: Creating safe, inclusive and welcoming environments.</i>			
1	Users of the river corridor have a coherent experience of the story of the river and can find their way easily.	<p>Develop a coherent story of the river.</p> <p>Scope and develop a signage plan to tell the story of the river.</p> <p>Update all signage to recognize the Māori name of Ōpāwaho.</p> <p>Install directional signage to indicate direction and distances to nearby destinations.</p>	<p>Ngai Tūāhuriri in partnership with Council (Parks Unit).</p>
2	Sites of historical, natural, and educational interest are to be recognised along the river with the development of a river trail.	<p>Identify and scope out a coherent landscape plan that includes spaces such as art installations, contemplation spaces, and accessible information locations.</p> <p>Create places to learn about past activities, plants, fish, birds, lizards and other things of interest.</p>	<p>Partnership between Ngai Tūāhuriri and Council (Parks Unit).</p> <p>In consultation with community groups.</p>
Water quality to be healthy and graded as ‘swimmable’			
<i>Kaitiakitanga: Supporting biodiversity, improved water quality and an integrated approach to pollution.</i>			
<i>Hauroa: Providing opportunities for physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing through the environment.</i>			
<i>Wairuatanga: Supporting the distinctive identity of the river, its natural environment and protection of mauri.</i>			
<i>Mātauranga: Activity in the river corridor to support the development of knowledge, understanding, education, cultural practices, and the sharing of that knowledge to the community.</i>			
3	<p>Maximise riparian planting along the length of the river.</p> <p><i>(Much of this land lies in Parks jurisdiction with the bulk of the remainder as road reserve).</i></p>	<p>Space for planting will be identified and prioritised as part of ongoing work.</p> <p>Riparian planting, including taller shading vegetation, to filter run-off into the river and shade the river to reduce temperatures and nuisance aquatic plant growth.</p>	<p>Council (Parks Unit and Transport Unit)</p> <p>In liaison with local community groups.</p>

Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
4	Address sediment and associated management issues.	Scoping and developing a strategy that outlines the river issues related to sediment build-up, and management approaches to be implemented.	Council (Three Waters Unit).
5	Manage pollutants entering the river.	Develop a stormwater strategy to manage pollutants and address issues at discharge sites, such as the discharge near end of Mackenzie Avenue. Install filters and pollution traps at stormwater discharge sites.	Council (Three Waters Unit).
6	Enable local residents and businesses to take personal and collective responsibility for reducing pollutants entering the river, including garden waste and chemicals used on private land.	Scope and develop an education strategy for public, schools, local property owners and local businesses. Support the Christchurch Stormwater Network Discharge Consent process.	Council (Three Waters Unit). Alongside Community Waterways Partnership groups.
Enhancing the Natural Life <i>Kaitiakitanga: Local residents and businesses are encouraged to become guardians and stewards of the local environment.</i> <i>Wairuatanga: Connectedness between people and the river serves to protect the mauri of the river corridor.</i>			
7	Predators will be controlled along the river corridor.	Develop an education strategy for local property owners regarding domestic predators. Drive a campaign for local residents on the harm that domestic cats, dogs and other animals have on local wildlife, and ways in which they can be controlled. Work within dog by-laws, and highlight mandatory dog leash or limited access areas.	Council (Parks Unit), in partnership with community groups.
8	Remove pests, including unwanted birds from the river corridor.	Develop a pest management strategy for the river corridor.	Council, other agencies and community groups.
9	Reduce feeding of wildlife in the river corridor.	Install signs along the river corridor educating people not to feed wildlife, including ducks and eels. Include education on the negative aspects of feeding. Identify a location suitable for an eel viewing platform.	Council (Parks Unit), other agencies and community groups.

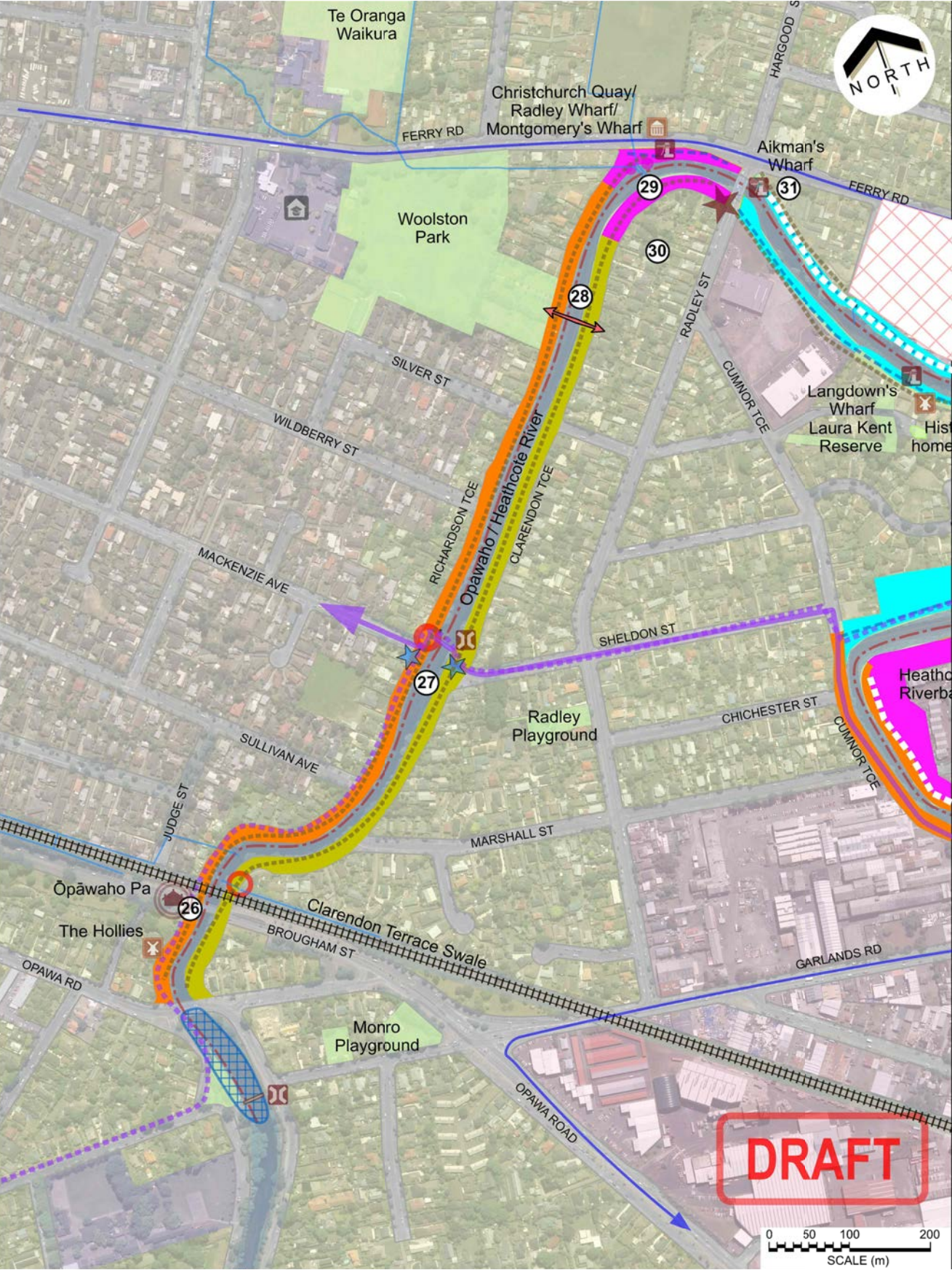
Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Fauna <i>Kaitiakitanga: Ensuring sustainability of the environment and biodiversity</i>			
10	Fish and whitebait in the river are managed sustainably.	Develop a plan for the sustainable management of fish and whitebait in the river. Investigate creating a River Reserve or local bylaw that prohibits fishing and whitebaiting in the section of the river in the section between Radley St to The Cut. Protect and enhance whitebait spawning sites within this area.	Environment Canterbury, Council and community groups.
Human access <i>Manaakitanga: Reducing unwelcome intrusions to enhance visitor interaction.</i> <i>Hauroa: The physical environment promotes mental and physical wellbeing.</i> <i>Wairuatanga: The distinctive identity of the river corridor is calm, rich vegetation with quiet walking and cycle tracks.</i> <i>Mātauranga: Users of the river grow their understanding of the importance of caring for the ecosystem.</i>			
11	Establish and maintain safe walking tracks along whole river corridor.	Enhance and maintain existing tracks, and connect to newly established tracks along both banks of the river corridor. These tracks will weave in with the broader landscapes to blend with plantings, wildlife and habitat areas to reduce negative impacts.	Council (Parks Unit) and community groups.
12	Cycling tracks will be appropriately merged with the broader corridor planning.	Major Cycle Routes and other cycle tracks that pass along the river corridor will be explored to consider how to reduce negative effects on plantings, wildlife and habitats. This may include keeping cyclists to one side of the river corridor in some circumstances. Trails and amenities will be developed in support of indigenous species habitat requirements. Surface requirements will be considered alongside walking tracks to determine dual access opportunities and minimum requirements.	Council (Transport Unit).

Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
13	Vehicle intrusion (noise, pollution, and other negative effects) within river corridor to be reduced.	Identify areas in and adjacent to the river corridor that are opportunities to reduce vehicle intrusion, including options such as road design, speed restrictions, and one-way changes. Identify opportunities to carry out this work in alignment with the road renewal programme. Tracks will be identified as suitable for mountain bikes and motorbike users where damage to the river corridor can be minimised.	Council (Transport Unit).
14	Reduce the negative effects of human activities that intrude upon the river corridor. (Limiting the number of human, vessel and vehicle access points reduces opportunities for incidental intrusion and negative effects to specified areas and plantings, habitats and wildlife).	Identify pockets of amenity and access under the appropriate landscape types to manage human recreation activities and access points. Increase amenities around these spaces, including seating, vessel access, and parking. Enhancement projects will be developed to support indigenous species habitat requirements. Consider future limitations on vessel type, form of propulsion and size.	Council – cross unit responsibility in partnership with the community.
15	Enhance pedestrian access along the river corridor.	Look for opportunities to narrow roads and increase pedestrian focus when roads come up for renewal. For example, making Connal Street narrower (from the barrage) will allow the creation of a larger river reserve, including an unsealed walking track along the river to connect with the current grassed area.	Council (Transport Unit).
16	Improve interface with businesses that operate alongside the river.	Work with business owners to create opportunities to improve access to the river or identify more opportunities for vegetation screening.	Council (Three Waters Unit), through the Communities Waterways Partnership.
17	Identify future opportunities for alternative land use.	Review land zoning as it arises for potential changes that can be adapted into this plan.	Council – planning, Elected Members and Community Groups to advocate.

Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Planting			
<i>Whakapapa: The identity and history of the area is one of native plantings and biodiversity.</i>			
<i>Kaitiakitanga: Care for the environment, with a focus on future sustainability.</i>			
18	Increase native plantings along the river corridor to provide shade and bank stability, and to encourage birds lizards, and insects to flourish.	Create a cohesive landscape plan for the river corridor that identifies stretches of planting and programmes the work into future Council Long Term and Annual Plans. These plantings will work in with the appropriate landscape types.	Council – in partnership with Ngai Tūāhuriri, community groups.
19	Develop a tree succession plan.	Create a cohesive plan for the river corridor that directs the gradual replacement of exotic species with native species.	Council (Parks Unit).
20	Eliminate weeds across the river corridor.	Develop a weed plan that proactively addresses current and future weed elimination.	Council (Parks Unit).
Ongoing care and maintenance			
<i>Kaitiakitanga: Council and the community care for and protect the river as kaitiaki.</i>			
<i>Whanaungatanga: Partnering with local residents and businesses brings a community together, encouraging social wellbeing.</i>			
<i>Manaakitanga: People treat each other with respect, care and consideration of each other in a common and positive area of activity.</i>			
21	Partner with local residents and businesses as kaitiaki of the river.	Develop partnerships with local residents and businesses to encourage the community to act as caretakers of the river corridor. Identify locations where industry or private activity has encroached on river reserve or public land and work with property owners to return this land back to the river margin.	Council - alongside Community Waterways Partnership groups.
22	Develop a unified approach to rubbish management across the whole river corridor.	Develop a plan or strategy to encourage users, business and the community to clean their rubbish from the river corridor environs.	Council - alongside Community Waterways Partnership groups.
23	Ensure the activity along the corridor is coordinated and aligned to the coherent story of the river and this plan.	Create a River Guardian Scheme to coordinate all activity along the river and to ensure this plan is implemented.	Council – Elected members and community groups to advocate.
24	Monitor and mitigate bank erosion issues.	Develop a management plan to mitigate bank erosion issues for the length of river, with a focus on Radley Street to the Cut.	Council (Three Waters Unit).
25	Address and minimise the impact of localised flooding issues.	Investigate and develop a strategy for the river corridor to reduce the effects of flooding, in alignment with the District Plan. Plan for ways to reduce the traffic under the rail and highway bridges.	Council (Three Waters Unit and Transport Unit).

Opawa Road to Radley Street

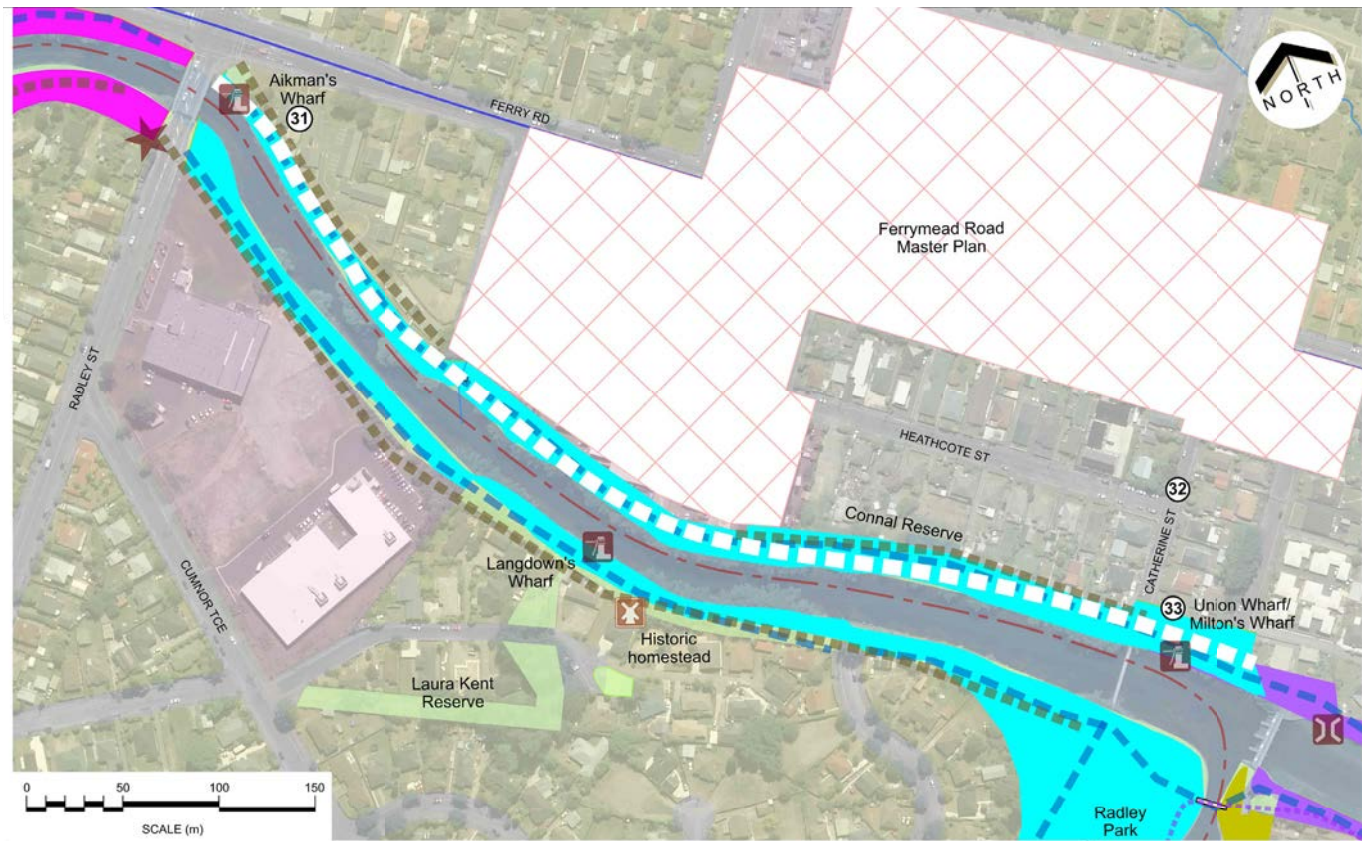
This section of the river is currently bounded by roading and residential development close to the river. Flooding is an issue with high tides and some residential sections have been abandoned. Large poplar and willow trees provide some shade. Panoramic views of and along the river are valued.



Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Amenity sites			
<i>Whanaungatanga: Community and public meeting spaces enabling community togetherness and social connections.</i>			
<i>Manaakitanga: Improve the way we use land in the area, including access and amenities that encourage interaction.</i>			
26	Create the Ōpāwaho Pa site as a focal point and hub.	<p>Develop a plan for the Ōpāwaho Pa site.</p> <p>Acknowledge the cultural history and connection that Māori have to this site and provide an opportunity to educate visitors to the site.</p> <p>Provide information about the site.</p>	Council in partnership with Ngai Tūāhuriri.
27	Develop a Hub (amenity area) at the Mackenzie Ave footbridge, where the Heathcote Express major cycleway route crosses the river.	<p>Take advantage of the existing water access already in place. This is a good site to create a hub to support these activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Enhancing the seating areab. Upgrading access to waterc. Bike standsd. Open grass areas for picnics.	Council – in partnership with community.
28	Woolston Park Woolston Park is a key site along the river which would benefit from being integrated into the river environment to enhance its potential as a community gathering space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Integrate Woolston Park with the riverb. Investigate adding a Footbridge across riverc. Create link between Woolston Park and Te Oranga o Waikurad. Native plant rongoā educational site (health uses for plants)e. Nature play.	Council – in partnership with community.
29	Ferry Road corner with jetty and historic wharf site. This site is already a key site that would benefit from further enhancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Refurbish existing jetty and infob. Denser planting while retaining views between Ferry Road and the riverc. Add seating.	Council in partnership with the community.
Improve adjacent empty spaces			
<i>Manaakitanga: Identify better ways to use land in the area.</i>			
30	<p>Develop a strategy for empty properties along the river.</p> <p>These existing sites are sitting empty. A usage strategy would enable them to give something back to the environment and the community.</p>	<p>Identify where former residential sections are deemed not fit for residential use, including those owned by Council, or private land available for purchase.</p> <p>These could be used for pocket parks, community gardens or fully planted with native vegetation, for example.</p>	Council in partnership with the community.

Radley Street to The Cut

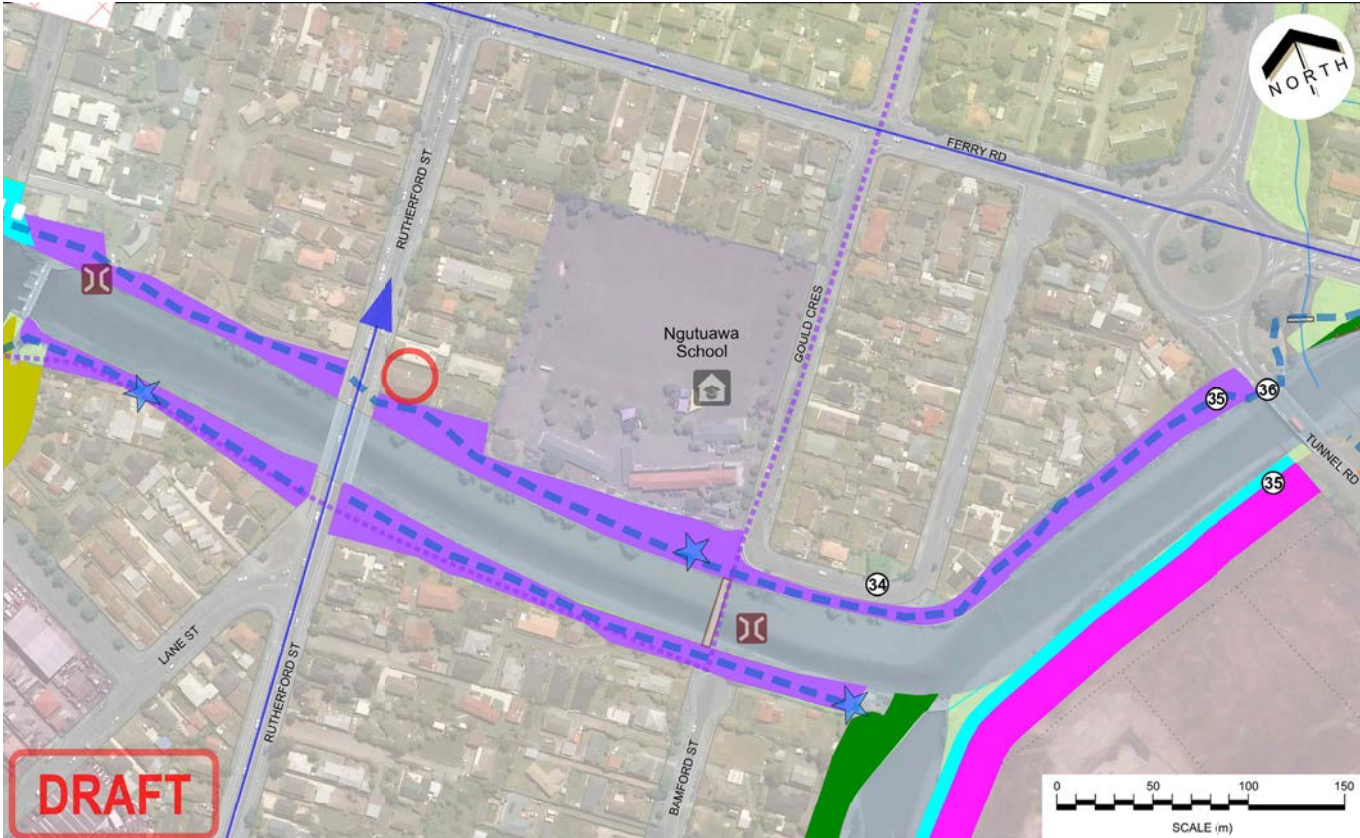
This section of the river is bounded by two reserves – on the true left the Connal Reserve and on the true right the Laura Kent Reserve. Recent native plantings in both reserves, with a cycle/walkway created through the Laura Kent Reserve, have encouraged more use as a walking and cycling area. This section of the river includes inanga spawning areas and in early European times, settlement influences were significant with a number of wharves for bringing goods in. The Woolston Walk highlighting places of historic and natural interest has yet to become popular.



Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Enhance the flow between river sections and public spaces			
Wairuatanga: Enhance the identity of the locations as part of the broader area.			
Hauora: Enhance high use areas to encourage use of the natural environment.			
31	Enhance the Connal Reserve track to improve access.	Upgrade the path on the true left of the river to a narrow continuous grit path. An enhanced path along this section will improve access.	Council in partnership with the community.
32	Enhance linkages between Woolston Village and the river to improve people's connection to it by creating awareness and a pleasant and safe access.	Refer to the Ferry Rd Masterplan. Improve access to the river corridor from Woolston Village.	Council.
Wildlife information site			
Whakapapa: Acknowledge the history of wildlife in the area.			
Mātauranga: Develop the knowledge and understanding of cultural practices and caring for the wildlife of the area.			
33	Tuna information and viewing site.	Investigate the creation of a tuna viewing platform with information about tuna, inanga, and other wildlife at the old Union Wharf site in the Connal Reserve.	Community Waterways Partnership.

The Cut to Tunnel Road

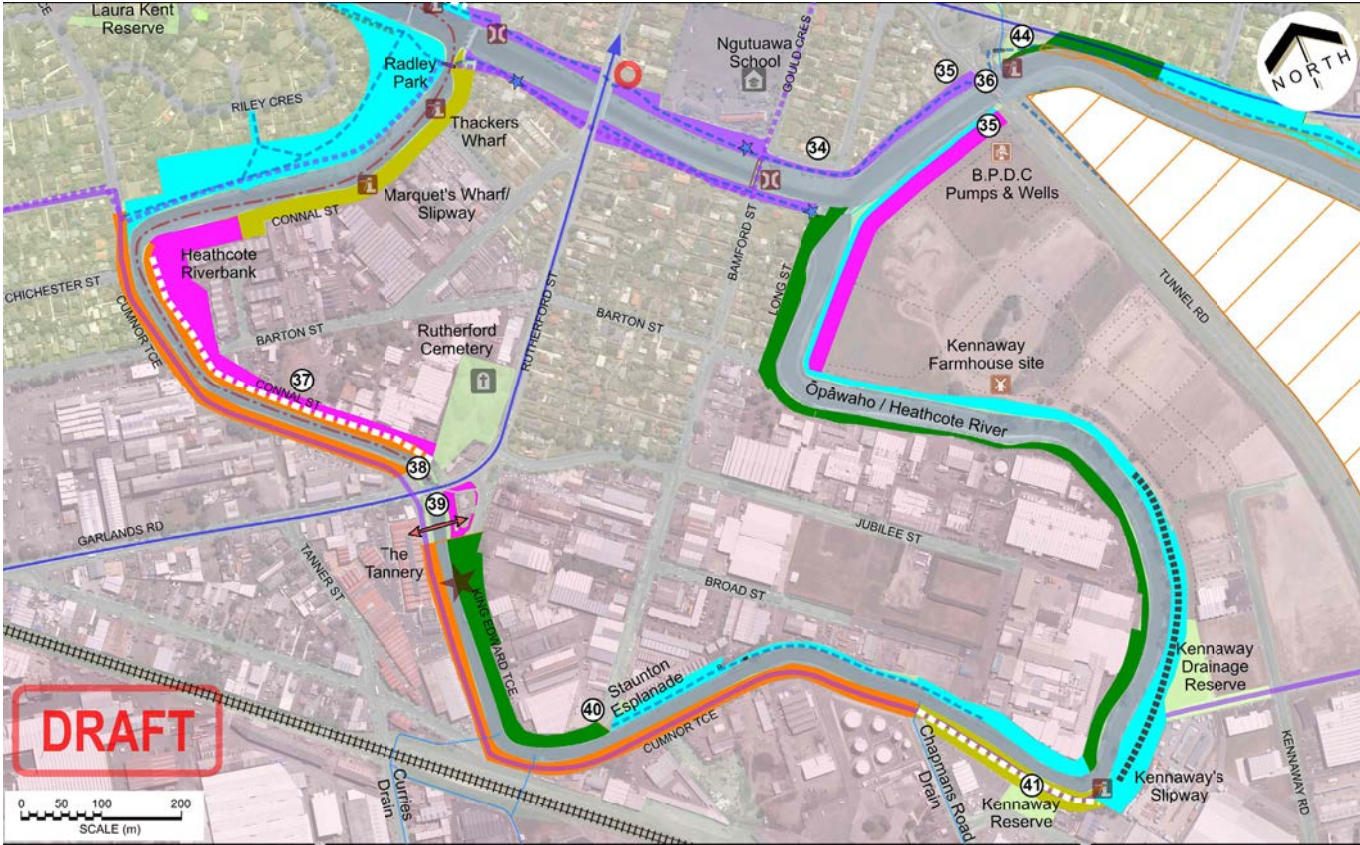
In the 1980’s it was decided to bypass the Woolston loop of the river to increase the amount of water that could be evacuated in times of flooding. The concrete sided channel (510m in length) allows water to flow directly out to the estuary when the gates on the barrage are lifted. Willow trees are planted along The Cut with some small isolated pockets of small native vegetation. Sealed tracks are installed on either side. The Cut is undeniably a human intrusion on the environment with a brutal straight concrete sided waterway and straight sealed paths.



Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Pedestrian and cycle track improvements			
Whanaungatanga: Identify areas for the public to gather and transit safely.			
Manaakitanga: Develop a safe and inclusive environment where pedestrians and cyclists can move through the area safely.			
34	Small park on Gould Crescent, near Ngutuawa School – this would benefit from better integration with the river.	Scope and develop a plan to integrate with river.	Council (Parks Unit).
35	Access underneath the Tunnel Road Bridge. This area currently feels unsafe and can only be accessed during low tide. It is a key access point to enable cycle and pedestrian access past Tunnel Road.	Improve the passageway under the Tunnel Road bridge on the true left and the true right for both pedestrians and cyclists.	Council.
36	Tunnel Road Bridge - enhanced river crossing. It is currently unsafe to cross the river at this point, leaving the river unable to be crossed by foot or cycle between Gould Crescent and the Ferrymead Bridge – a stretch of 2km.	Investigate attaching a pedestrian and cycle bridge to the existing vehicle bridge.	Council.

Woolston Loop

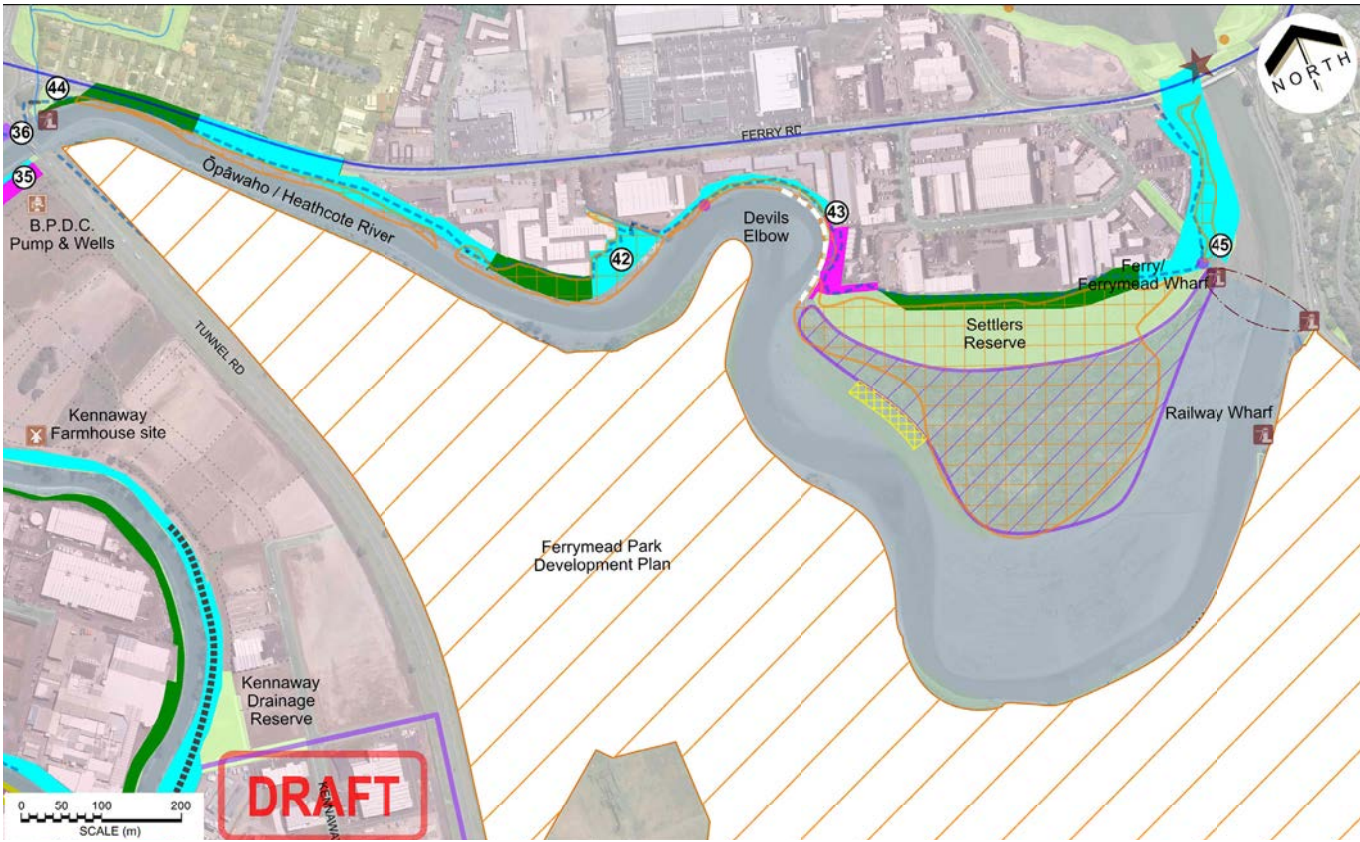
As the Ōpāwaho-Heathcote River flows along the Woolston Loop it passes through an industrial and commercial environment. Currently there are various tracks or roads on both sides of the river. Parts of the outside of the loop (true right) are sealed wide cycleways, and other parts a basic bike track. On the inside of the loop there is a wilderness walkway along part of the river which should be maintained to keep this area of the river accessible but not highly used. Work needs to be done to identify the ecological values (roosting shags, inanga spawning, etc) of this section of the river.



Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Safe and accessible walking and cycle paths			
Manaakitanga: safe and welcoming environments for all users.			
Hauora: Physical, spiritual and mental health and wellbeing for all users.			
37	Increase riparian planting.	<p>Investigate the removal of Connal Street (currently sealed) between Barton Street to Garlands Road and create a river corridor reserve with dense native planting and a small walking track. Planting to take the safety of track users into account.</p> <p>This section is currently subject to flooding and is effectively cut off as a road. Removing this road would allow a large area to be given back to the river.</p>	Council (Transport Unit).
38	<p>Garlands Road pedestrian safety improvements.</p> <p>There is currently no footpath on north side of the bridge which prevents pedestrians from accessing the signalised pedestrian crossing.</p>	Investigate transferring the safe passageway for pedestrians to the north side of the Garlands Road Bridge to enable walkers from upstream to access the controlled crossing of Garlands Road.	Council (Transport Unit).
39	Open up the Tannery shopping centre to take advantage of the river aspect.	<p>Investigate the opportunity to develop a landscaped area on the true left of the river to encourage interaction from both the Tannery shopping centre and their customers. This could involve closing the road next to the Tannery to enable businesses to develop the river-facing side. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Footbridgeb. Seatingc. Plantingd. Deck over watere. Closing the road or reducing parking to make the area more attractive.	Community Waterways Partnership.
40	Bamford St access: improve the connection for local residents and employees to the river.	Enhance the access to the walkway along the river.	Council in partnership with community.
41	Kennaway Reserve.	<p>Seek opportunities to carry out work in alignment with the Major Cycle Route development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Enhanced plantingb. Leave open space for local usersc. Additional seating for local employees to use.	Council, Elected members and community to advocate.

Tunnel Road to Estuary

This section of the river moves into a tidal salt marsh estuarine environment. Walking tracks extend from the bridge to the estuary along the northern side, and along the majority of the southern side.



Action	Description	How this will be achieved	Responsible
Track improvements			
<i>Wairuatanga: Creating logical and cohesive connections between spaces that are appropriate for the intended use.</i>			
<i>Hauora: Identification of possible recreation spaces such as mountain bike tracks and walking tracks.</i>			
42	Realign track sections to create safer access for cyclists and pedestrians where tight bends affect sightlines.	Investigate options for realigning sections of the track to improve sightlines and increase opportunities for planting.	Council (Parks and Transport Units) in partnership with community.
43	Remove the eco-junk along the river banks (the plastic netting was used for bank stabilisation is now decaying and polluting the estuarine ecosystem).	Programme for removal of pollutants in the lower true left of the estuary is a priority.	Council (Three Waters Unit).
Historical sites			
<i>Whakapapa: Acknowledge the history of the area, including its identity and ancestral use.</i>			
44	Steamwharf Stream historic site. This is a large site that provides an opportunity for additional planting and seating next to the site of the historic wharf.	Denser planting along road edge while retaining site lines to Ferry Road. Additional seating.	Council (Parks and Heritage) in partnership with community groups.
45	Ferry crossing site, Settlers Reserve. This historic site would benefit from restoration.	Refurbish. Address bank erosion.	Council in partnership with community groups.

Opportunities to get involved

Organisation	Contact	Website	About
Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network	info@ohrn.nz	www.ohrn.nz	The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network (OHRN) is an Incorporated Society actively working toward the restoration of the river through collaboration with Ngāi Tahu, communities, local government, businesses, groups and individuals.
Laura Kent Reserve Workgroup	Dugald Wilson dugaldwil@gmail.com	www.ohrn.nz	The group undertakes work to develop and look after the Laura Kent and Connal Reserves. Meet first Saturday of the month 9-11am to plant, weed, mulch, remove rubbish, and enjoy catching up over morning tea. We are part of the OHRN.
Christchurch City Council		www.ccc.govt.nz/parks-and-gardens/volunteer-in-parks/	Volunteering is a great way to help look after the environment you enjoy. Learn more about your community, be active in the outdoors and meet new people. Find an event for you, your family and friends to join. There are many events throughout the year. Activities vary, but may involve general clean ups, planting, weeding and mulching.
Calder Green – Forest & Bird	zip.gail@xtra.co.nz	www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/north-canterbury/calder-green-reserve-north-canterbury	Our aim is to maintain an ‘open sanctuary’ for the protection and enhancement of the indigenous flora and fauna of the area. We monitor and protect the saltmarsh itself. We have a restoration planting zone alongside the river which is intended to improve the habitat for wildlife, in particular birds and lizards. We do bird surveys four times per year. Volunteers are needed for all these activities as well as to help us with watering, weeding and general maintenance of the restoration zone.
Roimata Food Commons		www.facebook.com/roimatafoodcommons/	As the project has evolved over the last 2 years, we have realised that Roimata Food Commons is about our people in the community, and the space invites us to think about our connection with each other, with food and with nature. If you live in the Roimata/Woolston or Opawa areas around Radley Park and are keen to support this project, then talk to us. We look forward to growing and nourishing our community together.

Organisation	Contact	Website	About
Steam Wharf Stream	steamwharfstream@gmail.com	www.facebook.com/steamwharfstream/	Steam Wharf Stream Reserve (SWSR) is a spring-fed stream that runs parallel to Ferry Road from Alports Place and joins the Opawaho Heathcote River after Kotuku Reserve. Steam Wharf Stream Reserve underwent restoration in 1997 by the CCC and is now a mature riparian habitat. SWSR Community Group maintain the existing plants and habitat and participate in the Whitebait Watch project (to identify and record whitebait spawning sites). Community volunteers meet during the summer and autumn spawning season to perform spawning surveys.
Ferrymead Heathcote Saltmarsh		www.facebook.com/Ferrymead-Heathcote-Saltmarsh-102429881972339	This area is CCC land. The area was disturbed and partially filled during the construction of the Tunnel Road motorway. CCC is restoring the site by allowing the high tide to gently inundate this area and re-establish the original saltmarsh. We are a group of local residents and interested individuals supporting the CCC Regional Park Ranger in the restoration of this saltmarsh, returning it to a flourishing ecological niche. We are planting species that are appropriate for a saltmarsh and its margins, removing pine trees and gradually expanding the planted margins.
The Estuary Trust	info@estuary.org.nz	www.estuary.org.nz www.facebook.com/estuarytrust	The Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust (aka the Estuary Trust) is a charitable society incorporated in 2002. The Trust is active in the protection and enhancement of the estuary for recreation, ecological, educational and landscape values. Communities working together as a ‘voice for the estuary’. Thistledown Wetland Reserve has working bees are the last Saturday of each month, 10am – 12 noon. Meet at the end of Thistledown Place, off Hargood Street.
Summit Road Society	secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz	www.summitroadsociety.org.nz	The Summit Road Society is a grassroots conservation organisation that works to protect and restore the Port Hills and provide for public access. We own and manage four reserves on the Port Hills, including Linda Woods Reserve in Heathcote.
Predator Free Port Hills	marie@predatorfreeporthills.org.nz	www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz	An initiative of the Summit Road Society, Predator Free Port Hills supports community and backyard trapping across the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour, with the Ōpāwaho as the boundary on the city side. We provide subsidised traps for sale and run regular events for trappers.

Ōpāwaho
**Lower Heathcote
Guidance Plan**

2022
