

Proposed Bulls Community Centre

Community Update No. 1



Concept design — view of the new Centre

The Project at a Glance

New Town Hall, Library and Information Centre - with town square, carpark and bus interchange

Town Hall capacity - 306 seated (plus 30 additional seats on mezzanine area)

Total floor area - 832m²; Total site area - 2150m² (approx.)

Estimated cost - \$4.36 million (\$1.6 million rate funded loan)

Rating impact - \$18.69/year (funded district-wide and includes comparable funding for similar projects in Marton and Taihape)

Expected construction start - May/June 2017



October 2016

The story so far ...

In late 2013 the Rangitikei District Council (Council) approved funding to develop a Town Centre Plan (TCP) for Bulls, which included looking at the co-location of the library, town hall and information centre/bus depot activities. The Bulls Community Committee (BCC) supported the proposal and established a subcommittee - the Bulls Town Centre Steering Group - to provide local guidance for the project. Creative Communities were engaged by Council to prepare the Bulls TCP.

In early 2014 co-location options were defined and evaluation criteria developed. Six co-location sites were then identified and evaluated, and the three top scoring locations (Toy Library site, Information Centre site and Criterion Hotel site) were put out for community consultation. A newsletter drop was made to every property in the Bulls district, and 110 responses were received. Two-thirds of responses favoured the Criterion site, which the BCC endorsed. Council adopted the Bulls TCP in June with the Criterion site as the preferred location for new multi-purpose centre.

In late 2014 Council considered purchasing the Criterion site outright, but opted for an agreement with a joint-venture partner (JVP) who would purchase the site. Such an agreement meant Council was not directly negotiating the purchase with the owner, which risked elevating the purchase price. The added benefit of a JVP agreement is that it allowed Council to purchase only that portion of the site needed for a new centre and at a time when the necessary funding was in place.

In March/April 2015 Council publicly consulted on the draft 2015-25 Long Term Plan (LTP), which included the proposal to build a new community centre in Bulls.

The information included the projected costs, funding, impact on rates and debt. It also covered the likely consequences of doing nothing - having to maintain and strengthen old earthquake-prone buildings that don't meet current building standards or community needs. Two-thirds of the community feedback received supported the proposal to build a new centre on the Criterion site. On that basis Council adopted the LTP and confirmed its intention to progress with the project.

The project stages



Concept design—hall and stage area

The design process

Architecture Workshop was appointed to prepare the designs and plans for the new Centre. A group of community and Council representatives met regularly in the first half of 2016 to guide the development of the preliminary designs.

Centre designs shaped by community feedback

At the public meeting in August 2016 the Bulls community was presented with the preliminary designs for the proposed Bulls multi-purpose centre. Community feedback on the draft designs was invited, which showed there was strong support for the concept and included some suggestions for improvement. The most common concerns were that the hall space and stage area were too small, and that not enough toilets were being provided. As a result of the feedback a redesign of the hall space/ stage area and an increase in the number of toilets have been included in the updated plans. The enlarged hall space has capacity to seat 306 people and the design now provides for 10 toilets in the proposed Centre. These changes increase the estimated project cost by \$400,000.

The project budget

The original budget for the project was set in 2014 at \$3.61 million, with the rate-funded contribution capped at \$1.6 million. At that time no provision was made to adjust the budget for inflation, as it had been assumed at the time that the project would proceed to construction in 2015. Applying an inflation adjustment to the original approved budget and allowing for the additional costs to meet community expectations meant Council needed to consider the new budget figure of \$4.36 million. These increased costs were presented to Council at the end of September 2016.

The information included a proposal for funding the extra costs - through increased local fundraising and corporate sponsorship, and provision for additional Council funding through reserves and/or additional property sales.

While considering the amended costs Councillors agreed that the new facility needed to be future-proofed and reflect the needs of the Bulls community. In considering a reviewed budget, Council was mindful of the need to maintain the previously agreed level of rate funding for the project.

The revised budget of \$4.36 million was approved by Council, and the funding model to achieve that is shown below (note that the rate funded component of \$1.6 million and rate impact is unchanged from the level agreed by Council in 2014/15):

Council – rate funded loan	\$1,600,000
Council – surplus property sales	\$ 565,000
Local community funding	\$ 150,000
Lotteries/Government funding	\$1,000,000
Regional/local trusts funding	\$ 350,000
Corporate sponsorship	\$ 200,000
Council – reserves/additional property sales	\$ 500,000
Total	\$4,365,000

The rate impact is \$18.69/year (per property district -wide), which includes comparable funding for similar projects in Marton and Taihape.



Concept design—library, stairwell

Raising the funds

Apart from the rates funding component, all other funding categories are based on a best estimate. For example, a funding application for \$700,000 is currently with Lotteries for consideration but the level of funding to be approved is their decision and we won't know that until December 2016 when funding outcomes are notified. Funding for the project needs to be considered on a total budget basis, which means that if some areas of funding don't produce the level expected, then more will be required from other areas.

A local fundraising committee is being established and a local fundraising programme is being developed. Buy-in from the Bulls community is essential if we are going to be able to meet our fundraising targets and the programme will make it easy for everyone to contribute to the project at a level that they can afford. Details of the fundraising programme, how to contribute to the project and how donations are to be recognised will be announced in the next month or so.

Sale of surplus property

Council has agreed to start the process for the sale of the Bulls Information Centre, noting that the sale will be conditional on the completion of the new Centre. The information centre and bus depot will continue to operate from the current location in the meantime. The Town Hall and Plunket properties have also been signalled for sale, as they will be surplus once the new Centre is operational. The sale of these properties will also be conditional on the completion of the new Centre. Council also owns undeveloped property in Bulls, and this could be sold to help fund the project. No additional property sales will be undertaken without first consulting with the Bulls community.

What's next?

The next stage in the project is developing the detailed designs for the new Centre. Once the designs and plans have been finalised, detailed specifications will be drawn up and the costings re-checked to ensure the project can be delivered within budget. At this point Council will decide whether to proceed to tender for the construction of the new Centre.

The tender prices will determine the definitive cost of constructing the new Centre and whether Council proceeds to construction. Council has confirmed that construction won't start until at least 70% of the required external funding is in place, which includes the local community funding component.

Design plans are expected to be finalised prior to Christmas, with the project expected to go out to tender in early 2017. At this stage, and subject to cost and fundraising progress, a contract to build the new Centre could be awarded in April 2017, with construction starting shortly thereafter.

Staying connected

Future updates on the proposed Centre will be available to the community as the project progresses. These updates, and other project information - such as designs and plans for the proposed Centre - and notifications will be available on Council's website at www.rangitikei.govt.nz and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Bullscommunitycentre/

The next update is expected prior to Christmas when the draft final designs will be available for community review and feedback. Information on the timing of the detailed plans and how the community can provide feedback will be available later in November. In the meantime, any feedback about the project can be emailed to BullsCentre@rangitikei.govt.nz.



Concept design—outside area