

Tena koutou katoa

Ko Mary Cave-Palmer toku ingoa

I've lived and worked in Hamilton for the last 40 years and I've never done this before.

I'm doing it now because, as a lay person, and as a Riverlea resident for the last 26 years, I feel strongly about 3 aspects of the Weston Lea proposal:

1. The riverbank margin planned is too narrow to ensure an ecological corridor that supports the habitat of local wildlife and the wellbeing of local people.
 - a. As the Riverlea Environmental Society has pointed out, there are critically endangered longtailed bats in Hammond park and they need a green corridor around the river so that they are not deterred by bright lights from going to the river to feed on insects.
 - b. Also, the hawks and the tui and many other species of birds need tall trees and room to swoop and dart.
 - c. A wider riverbank margin is needed to ensure the survival of this last significant high-biodiversity piece of Hamilton.

The District Plan already provides for this. But the proposed width of the setback from the river does not comply with the City's existing Structure Plan or District Plan. Council requires compliance by everyone else but does not comply with it's own? That's really not good enough!

- d. A wider riverbank margin is more beneficial for humans too - it provides shelter, shade and walking opportunities, conducive to physical and mental wellbeing.

It is easy to underestimate the benefits of living near a healthy ecosystem. Not just physical benefits. I've seen the therapeutic effects first hand.

My late husband was crippled with arthritis and unfortunately he was allergic to anti-inflammatory painkillers. So he was in a lot of pain for many years. I have no doubt that being able to enjoy watching local birdlife from the bedroom window helped him to cope with his chronic pain.

It's not just the visual appeal. It's more about being reminded of a bigger natural world. Do not underestimate the beneficial effects of a healthy ecosystem on quality of human life in terms of both physical and mental wellbeing.

2. We need to prevent storm water run-off polluting the river – not EXCEPT FOR in extreme rainfall events, but INCLUDING in extreme rainfall events. Extreme weather is much more common these days. Climate change is evident. As Graham McBride's submission explains, it only takes one extreme event to cause pollution from run-off that has a lasting detrimental effect on the river. Gone are the days of thinking that rivers could endlessly self-cleanse. That might have been the case 50 years ago, but it is not any more.

It makes no sense to save the ecological corridor and then pollute the river that runs through it.

3. The City's water supply needs to be boosted and better managed before we add another 8000 houses to the draw on it. The City already restricts water usage from about November to March – what impact will the proposed development have on the City's ability to satisfy the demand for fresh water? This should be a major concern for both industry and residents.

Finally, I work in the Department of Conservation but I do not represent it here today. I'm an accountant not an ecologist. However, through DOC I've become aware that damage to ecosystems threatens the security of our supplies of food, fresh water and energy.

Ultimately, healthy ecosystems are essential for healthy human beings. I know from my work as a DOC accountant that it takes a long time and huge expense to repair ecosystems once they have been damaged.

Let's take a long-term view - yes, allow the city to grow, but minimise the damage to the environment as much as we can. Let's not blow this opportunity to leave the right legacy for future generations.

In summary: I have 3 requests of the Council and the Commission – these are not onerous, I'm just asking you to be responsible caretakers of the City's valuable resources.

1. An ecological corridor beside the river that supports wildlife and the wellbeing of people.
2. prevent storm water run-off polluting the river, especially in extreme rainfall events
3. boost the city's water supply BEFORE we add to the draw on it

Kia ora tatou