



Delivering transport hubs and a new urban neighbourhood

Vision

To create a new exemplar neighbourhood for Christchurch at the Middleton rail yards with a passenger rail transport hub at the heart of the development, where residents can take pride in their livable, walkable, connected, affordable community and help fulfill the region's zero-carbon goals.

Mission

The **Middleton and Rolleston Transformation Initiative (MaRTI)** aims to bring together the diverse agencies and communities with a stake in our regional rail system and in high quality public transportation, housing, and neighbourhood development, around a vision that includes:

- Public transport hubs based around passenger rail
- New sustainable development centred around passenger rail stations
- High quality affordable homes within an easy walk of new passenger rail stations
- Landmark destinations on the Rolleston to Christchurch passenger rail service



Overview

The Middleton rail yards neighbourhood has the potential to be a sustainable new community, built on brownfield land to the west of Central Christchurch, that is accessible, healthy, and high quality. This 'smart' regeneration project will be master-planned and showcase best practices in 'placemaking'.

With the Middleton rail yards now approaching peak capacity, there is a unique opportunity over the next five years for KiwiRail to consolidate their current freight operations outside of Christchurch and to work with other agencies to repurpose the rail yards site, integrating passenger rail into the heart of a new residential neighbourhood. Relocating the current KiwiRail operations to Rolleston will create a logistics superhub in the Selwyn District and allow for future-proofing rail-based development.

MaRTI components

Rail yards strategic plan 2019–2023

The plan sets out the why and the how of the proposed development. Clear direction and strong governance will be needed to realise the huge potential of this project.

Transport

A key purpose of MaRTI and the Middleton rail yard neighbourhood development is to promote alternatives to car use. The MaRTI plan aims to reduce urban sprawl and car dependency. The neighbourhood at Middleton rail yards will be a highly compact and accessible urban community. Unlike other housing developments built in Greater Christchurch post-earthquake, MaRTI seeks to deliver a traditional community plan, centred around local services, within easy walking and cycling distance from homes, and good public transport links to the rest of the city.

Up to 1,600 new homes

The development will incorporate a range of housing types, including high and medium densities that will support a diverse population. Local stakeholders and the community will be involved in master planning.

New homes will be supported by local services. The area sits to the southwest of central Christchurch, south of the Riccarton key activity centre and north of a large employment centre at Middleton. Connected networks will allow the new neighbourhood and community to access employment, goods and services in adjacent neighbourhoods and throughout Christchurch.

New public spaces

The new station will form a new landmark and will be supported by a high quality public realm, which will be further supported by a network of new spaces, parks and streets. Careful placemaking will allow residents to move around the development safely and comfortably.

Why the need for MaRTI?

- Greater Christchurch is New Zealand's second largest and second fastest growing urban environment.
- Christchurch will be New Zealand's second city to reach half a million people in the next year or so and the city has the potential to grow to 750,000 by 2050.
- The southwest corridor, from central Christchurch extending into Selwyn District, is one of the fastest growing urban areas in New Zealand.
- There is currently a huge demand for good quality public housing and affordable housing.
- Canterbury has a significantly higher car ownership rate than the Auckland or Wellington regions and correspondingly higher emissions of CO₂.
- More and better public transportation options are needed to reduce carbon emissions. Further urban sprawl would increase our emissions and thus needs to be avoided.
- Christchurch has identified it needs to transport more people in fewer vehicles to avoid the city becoming chronically traffic congested.
- The Future of Rail project (a cross-agency project with NZTA, Treasury, Auckland Transport and Greater Wellington) leaves Christchurch outside the conversation of using rail in our transport network.
- KiwiRail has identified that, given the current configuration, Middleton rail yards will soon reach its capacity limits. This gives KiwiRail a strategic opportunity to better use its Greater Christchurch rail corridors to both support the movement of freight and facilitate the growth of a better built environment.

How do we create the change?

The MaRTI plan:

- Provides a blueprint to develop a new spatial plan for Christchurch, called the Christchurch Hand Plan
- This is based on the very successful Copenhagen Finger Plan.
 - Building on a 1947 urban plan, the city of Copenhagen developed along five fingers centred on commuter rail lines extending out from the 'palm', the busy and vibrant centre of Copenhagen.
- Requests that central Government:
 - Initiate and fund the relocation of KiwiRail's operations at Middleton rail yards.
 - Invite Canterbury representation on the Future of Rail Project.
 - Integrate rail projects with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
 - Allow the Housing and Urban Development Authority to create a development corporation to implement the MaRTI project with an independent local board governance structure.
 - Commit to implementing the transport infrastructure for MaRTI.

- Support the implementation of MaRTI with a local transport infrastructure package to allow for a multi-modal connected network, i.e. infrastructure for cycle lanes, bus priority, micro-mobility, etc.
- Develop a master plan for the former rail yards, to show how the site could be developed around the new passenger rail station and how it connects with its surrounding land uses and communities.
- Confirm governance structures, delivery plans, and design review panels, engage with key stakeholders and the community.