

THE PRESS

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TE MATATIKA



Bogged down in Wales
Mud snorkelling sees tourists
surfacing in tiny Welsh town

STUFF TRAVEL



City rail case stacking up

‘Events Express’ train service could have a passenger platform at Moorhouse Ave overbridge

TRANSPORT
Sinead Gill

The case for privately run passenger rail in Greater Christchurch for major events appears to be stacking up, with private investors, the city council and KiwiRail keenly involved.

What is understood to be across-the-board support for Mainland Rail’s “Events Express” train may finally be made public in an early December presentation to the Christchurch City Council.

The company’s case for a private rail service from Rangiora, Rolleston and potentially Ashburton was first revealed by *The Press* in August. Director Paul Jackson wants the service to begin in time for the opening of One New Zealand Stadium at Te Kaha in

April, but the “key ingredient” was a central-city platform.

Jackson now says his company will not be funding the platform directly, but “private partners” were involved, and they were collaborating on the draft design.

Mayor Phil Mauger told *The Press* although he understood the platform location – by the Moorhouse Ave and Colombo St overbridge – was on railway land, the city council was considering leasing some attached land.

The land, owned by the South City C3 Church, could be where passengers spilled out from the train and hopped onto e-scooters, Mauger said, or began the 1.1 kilometre walk to the stadium.

Located at the end of a cul-de-sac on Pilgrim Pl, he imagined a place where taxis could lay in wait.

“I’d love to see it work, I really would,” he said. “I feel we should put something [money] towards it to see if it works.”

The closest existing platform was 3.8 kilometres from the stadium in Addington.

The project was largely aimed at greater Christchurch, with clear demand from residents in the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts, but Jackson has previously said the train may go as far as Ashburton.

Although unconfirmed, the company may have aspirations for a train service travelling as far as Dunedin. Mauger, who has met with Mainland Rail and is a keen supporter, twice publicly said the train would go to Dunedin while on the campaign trail, ahead of the October elections.

Mainland Rail did not confirm or deny the possibility when asked again last week.

“We have a number of initiatives under way to expand passenger rail in Christchurch, and we expect to make further announcements shortly,” Jackson said.

He said his team was working closely with KiwiRail on the project.

A KiwiRail spokesperson confirmed technical discussions were progressing and building a new station was a key step.

There had also been preliminary discussions about monthly slots in the track timetable for an event service, the KiwiRail spokesperson said.

The passenger carriages were already purchased and transported to the South Island earlier this year.

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Countdown to Christmas starts in city

Christchurch’s annual Christmas Show Parade – which heralds the beginning of the festive season in the city – saw 45,000 people gather to enjoy floats, characters, rides and – of course – the arrival of Santa yesterday.

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Pictured: The biggest cheer at the Canterbury Agricultural Park yesterday was reserved for the big man himself.

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