

Paremata Residents Association

ANNUAL REPORT August 2022

Introduction

2021-22 has been another year disrupted by Covid-19. Our committee meetings for September 21 and February 22 were cancelled due to Covid restrictions, and both the March and April meetings were carried out on-line using Zoom.

However, despite Covid the local issues and activities didn't stop, and our remaining two village projects continued.

Key Activities 2021 - 22

Mana Esplanade Clearways

By far the most time-consuming and frustrating activity over the last year has been related to the Mana Clearways, particularly the decision by Waka Kotahi, the NZ Transport Agency, to renege on their commitment to close the clearways when Transmission Gully Motorway (TGM) opened (a commitment made to the community at Environment Court hearings), and also to override the consultation requirements of the designation applying to the Esplanade and St Andrews Road. Instead, Waka Kotahi is following the timing laid out by the Board of Inquiry for the TGM consent, to consult between 6 and 12 months after the opening of TGM.

The Association does not necessarily object to this delaying of consultation on matters relating to the future operation of the highway through Paremata and Plimmerton. However, we see no reason why the dangerous and divisive clearways could not be closed immediately, as promised, at least on a trial basis. In fact, there are good reasons for carrying out a trial closing. For more information on this please refer to several articles on our website, www.paremataresidents.co.nz

But we did object to the lack of a response from Waka Kotahi to our many communications on the clearways (to the Board Chair, CEO, and officers), or even acknowledgement that they were reneging on their promise to the community, and their refusal to discuss the trial closure option with us. As a result, we found it necessary to follow Waka Kotahi's formal complaints process and also to make a complaint to the Ombudsman's Office, to the Minister of Transport and our local MP. Although we have eventually received a response from the CEO, and subsequently an officer, neither fully addressed nor resolved the issue. And responses from the Ombudsman, Minister and MP were not helpful either.

It feels like we have been stonewalled. Clearly, Waka Kotahi is not prepared to have any engagement with us until they decide it's time to consult on the future form of Mana Esplanade and St Andrews Road and there now seems real doubt that previous community expectations will be respected.

Following the opening of TGM, we spent several periods monitoring traffic volumes on Mana Esplanade. This showed an immediate reduction of around 50% in total traffic and around 75% of heavy vehicles. But it wasn't long before the number of heavy vehicles started to increase, as we expected with the clearways still operating. Nevertheless, peak traffic is now within the capacity of a single lane in both directions, i.e. the clearways are no longer needed for peak traffic. However, we continue to be concerned about the proportion of vehicles (between 23 and 37%) using the

kerbside lanes outside of clearway hours and the percentage of trucks (about 35%) using the clearway lanes both during and outside clearway times.

Currently, the Association is waiting for information from Waka Kotahi on Esplanade traffic counts and accident statistics since TGM opened. Although this type of information was previously easily obtained, it now appears that we are required to make requests under the Official Information Act to gain access to this data.

PCC Proposed District Plan

The hearing of submissions on the proposed District Plan (PDP) have continued this year, although at a much slower pace than originally advised. I made an on-line presentation in December 21 on the unsuitability of parts of Mana and Paremata for multi-storey/high density buildings. We are still waiting for the hearings on new proposed zonings to be advised..

In April 2022 the Council notified a proposed variation to the District Plan for feedback, which is required to achieve compliance with the new National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD 2020). The variation sets out PCC's interpretation of requirements for medium-density and high-density residential zones within a "walkable distance" of a rapid transport hub. In addition, a new rule enacted by government allows up to 3 residential dwellings up to 3 stories high on all sites in Porirua.

Your Association made a submission on the need to include as qualifying matters against this requirement areas in earthquake zones and impacted by climate change We also submitted on the need for the definition of "walkable distance" to take into account actual distance due to winding roads rather than simply straight-line distance. Also, that the practical "walkable distance" is affected by steep uphill roads. The Council will consider submissions made and notify a proposed variation in September.

NZTA Designation

The Association also lodged a further submission and had meetings with Waka Kotahi officers on their plans to amalgamate all the designations relating to SH59 (formerly SH1) in the proposed PDP. The proposed new designation had removed many of the conditions imposed by the Environment Court in previous designations on the basis that they were no longer considered to be relevant.

The designation hearings were held at the end of June, where Russell Morrison and I presented our case for retention of the clauses of the existing designations, at least until discussions on the future form of Mana Esplanade and St Andrews Road had been satisfactorily completed.

We await the recommendations of the Hearings Panel to see whether their report recommends any change to Waka Kotahi's position.

Village Projects

- ***Village Planning Programme***

When the village planning programme was "paused" for 2 years in 2020, existing funding for the Paremata Residents Association's two remaining projects (see below) was carried forward to allow completion but no additional funding was provided. A review of the Programme was completed this year (the Association provided its comments to the reviewer in an on-line session in March) and the review report was considered by Council in June.

Council has approved pausing the programme for a further year to allow phase 2 consultation on the options put forward in the report.

- ***Dolly Varden Foreshore Erosion Control***

The original plan to reshape the foreshore to protect against erosion was clearly unachievable after the village programme was paused. Instead, we were faced with having to negotiate work with the Parks dept – resulting in proposals to improve the access path between the reserve and beach, replanting of surrounding erosion prone areas, together with widening a section of the higher pathway along the reserve to improve safety. The contract for this work has been let and planting is planned to be carried out over winter.

Since we were faced with a funding “use it or lose it” situation and were unlikely to be able to get agreement on other important and fundable erosion control before the end of the financial year, the committee agreed to transfer the remaining \$17,000 to the Heritage Trail project.

Parks staff are also to carry out maintenance on other reserve vegetation and the existing timber wave wall.

- ***Ngati Toa Domain Heritage Trail***

The challenge was on this year to complete the Heritage Trail under the threat of losing funding at the end of Council’s financial year. While completion was not achieved, substantial progress has been made and some funding committed. Storyboard style and general content has been agreed, thanks to the willingness of all parties to reach agreement through both on-line and on-site meetings. However, finalising two locations has been made more difficult by Parks management not giving sign-off on a location previously agreed to, and being unprepared to consider a further location the team believes more suitable. This situation is still to be finalised, so archaeological authority has only been sought and approved for 3 of the 4 storyboard locations.

The storyboard frames have been manufactured and powder coated. The wording of Ngati Toa and European history has been reviewed and agreed, and Ngati Toa Rangatira will complete a mock-up design for agreement with PCC.

The unspent funding for the project, together with uncommitted funds transferred from the Foreshore project has been carried forward to the 22/23 financial year to allow completion of the project.

Local Issues

- ***Dolly Varden Reserve Access Barrier***

PCC Parks staff have raised the issue of vehicle access onto Dolly Varden Reserve causing damage to grassed areas on several occasions in the past. We have consistently argued against blocking access to the public. However, it became clear last year that Parks management was determined to block vehicle access by installing barriers at the bottom of the right of way between 34 and 36 the Esplanade.

After much correspondence and several meetings with Parks staff, we reached agreement with PCC’s deputy chief executive that bollards and supports for a gate would be installed, but the gate itself would be removed after construction. Suitable signage would identify that driving or parking vehicles on the reserve should be avoided whenever possible, particularly when the ground is wet. This would allow public behaviour to be monitored, and should it prove necessary to restrict vehicle access in the future, the options for this would be discussed and agreed with the Association (and adjacent property owners).

The bollards, gate supports, and signage have been installed and Parks staff have re-grassed the immediate area but have fitted and locked the gate to protect the new grass. This situation will

continue probably until the end of winter. We will be looking to make sure Parks keep their promise to remove the gate as soon as reasonably practical.

- **Dolly Varden Car Park**

In February we met with Parks staff who had started work on remodelling and upgrading the Dolly Varden car park. The meeting included immediate neighbours and the Commodore of the Paremata Boating Club.

I'm pleased to say that concerns over parking for boat trailers and boundary planting were resolved. Additional lighting for dark areas was discussed and agreed to be installed subject to funding. We will be checking that this is completed.

- **Esplanade Telephone Box**

The Spark telephone booth and free Wi-Fi facility is in the footpath outside the Dolly Varden car park, and partially obstructs sight lines for traffic leaving the car park. The Association has argued with Spark that the telephone box has value for this area (particularly for emergencies) and could be re-positioned to overcome sight obstruction. Spark argue that the box is infrequently used, and the phone equipment is obsolete. So, Spark has decided to remove the facility altogether in line with their recently announced plans to remove existing phone booths throughout NZ and replace them with a much smaller number of more modern booths. We believe the loss of this facility is a short-sighted move that we are powerless to stop.

- **Work in Pascoe Avenue – Parking & Islands**

Criticism from residents and on social media alerted the Association to work being carried out in Pascoe Avenue and at the rail crossing in late April this year. This is a KiwiRail crossing upgrade project that also includes two traffic islands each side of the rail crossing. The traffic island closest to the Esplanade is a significant distance from the rail crossing and includes a pedestrian refuge, which reduces the width of the road for parking and traffic in each direction. The pedestrian refuge is intended to guide pedestrians across the road to the new rail crossing. In addition, KiwiRail contractors have installed additional no parking yellow lines on both sides of the road – something that normally requires prior public notification.

We raised residents' concerns with the PCC – particularly concern for the loss of valuable parking spaces - with suggestions for change, including widening the road in conjunction with the Marina Motel re-development. Our suggestions that there be discussions involving all the interested parties have been declined and we are told it is up to KiwiRail to consult with the public. To our knowledge it hasn't happened yet, and it looks unlikely at this stage.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank your Executive Committee for their time and effort in allowing the Association to meet its commitments and representing the local residents of Papakowhai, Paremata, Mana and the southern part of Camborne. The current committee is:

Vice President	Russell Morrison
Treasurer	Francesse Middleton
Secretary	Frank Moes
Social Media	Coralie Morrison
Committee	Ian Barlow, Lorraine Taylor

Miles Buckingham and Ray Baker-Underhill were elected to committee at the last AGM but sadly resigned during the year. I thank both of them for their input.

Note: Their resignation has highlighted that the remaining committee of 7 is insufficient to allow a better distribution of workload and to always be confident of achieving a quorum at committee meetings. So, we are aiming for a committee of at least 10 for the next year.

Russell Morrison deserves special recognition for undertaking such a high workload during the year. We would have been unable to achieve the spread of communications, submissions, and presentations, containing the detailed argument required, without his input and knowledge.

I want to recognise the involvement of Ross Leggett, our Northern Ward Porirua City Councillor, and our Greater Wellington Councillors (Jenny Brash and Chris Kirk-Burnnand), for their representation and input at our committee meetings.

In addition, Bill Inge, the Council's remaining Village Planning staff member following the departure of Justine McDermott at Christmas, has provided valuable assistance in moving forward with our village projects and has been essential for on-going liaison with Council department staff.

And finally, but certainly not least, our thanks go to Tommy's Real Estate for their ongoing support with the printing and supply of newsletters and leaflets.

Tony Shaw

President, Paremata Residents Association