

Paremata Residents Association

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT October 2020

Introduction

It's been an unusual year (or should I say 16 months – due to AGM delays caused by Covid-19). But despite the disruptions and restrictions of Covid your committee has been involved in submissions, negotiations, projects and a range of issues affecting this community. The main activities are covered below.

Village Projects

- **Pausing of the Village Planning Programme**

In May this year, Council decided to pause the village planning programme for 2 years to allow the \$900,000 backlog of capital projects to be completed. This means our projects already approved for capital funding will continue, however funding will not continue for projects previously approved with operational funding. The Council will review the programme again in early 2022.

So what does this mean for Paremata Residents Association?

In 2019 Council approved an update of the 2012 Paremata Village Plan using operational funding and with Council assistance. Pausing the Village Planning Programme means that funding and assistance has stopped for at least 2 years.

Your vision, aspirations and priorities for our village have no doubt changed over the last 8 years, so we believe now is the right time to update the Village Plan. And with the planned opening of Transmission Gully Motorway next year there are opportunities for significant change in our area. It means we will need to move forward on updating our plan without Council support. With that in mind we listed ten topics for your feedback, together with any other ideas or comments, on the reverse side of the AGM notice to residents.

- **Paremata School Slow-down Zone**

When Paremata School pupils raised safety concerns over vehicle volume and speed along Paremata Crescent, the Paremata Residents Association liaised with the school, PCC Village Planning and traffic safety officers on the best way forward.

Vehicle speed was not found to be an issue but congestion at school drop-off and pick-up times was. Also there were no school signs to warn motorists. Changes have been made to parking times along Paremata Crescent, a school zone sign installed before Kiriwai Rd, and a solar powered smart school sign installed south of the school (the first in Porirua). Action is currently underway to improve the solar power being generated for this sign.

- **Mana Pedestrian & Commuter Lighting**

The installation of pedestrian lighting from Mana Station at the rear and northern sides of New World has been completed, with agreement from Foodstuff Ltd, Paul Deere (owner of Paremata New World supermarket) and the owner of Berkley Villas. Paul is providing power for the lights.

Ian Barlow has project managed this project for the Association in conjunction with Bill Inge from PCC's Village Planning team. In addition, a safer pedestrian route has been established from Mana station. Ian has also liaised with Foodstuffs to get overgrown shrubs pruned to improve visibility and safety in the northern carpark and with NZTA agents to restore lighting in the southern car park and shrub pruning along the adjacent footpath.

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

Unfortunately progress on this project has been affected by Covid and consultant availability. We are still to see draft plans for reshaping the reserve and measures to mitigate beach erosion.

In the meantime we have had on-site meetings with Council Parks staff and Village Planning to discuss concerns and options. \$44,000 of capital funding from Council's village projects budget is held for this project. A meeting with PCC, the consultant and ourselves is to be arranged.

- **Ngati Toa Domain Heritage Trail**

The project to provide a history trail of one of the earliest settlements in the Wellington region is still underway. Ian Barlow is also managing the project for the Association in conjunction with Wellington Lions, the PCC's Village Planning team and input from Ngati Toa Rangitira.

Changes have been made to heritage board locations and furniture due to archaeological issues. The locations have been agreed with Ngati Toa's Runanga Board. Iwi are developing the historical korero, the English version is complete. \$19,000 capital funding is available for this project.

Other Key Activities during the Year

- **Paremata Roundabout**

As expected, the long southbound traffic queues along Mana Esplanade significantly reduced when the Paremata Roundabout traffic lights were switched on for the evening peak last July.

It has caused a small inconvenience to northbound and SH58 traffic, but residents have said it is much safer to leave the Paremata Station carpark and it allows more equal traffic flow through the roundabout. We argued for this change with NZTA for a couple of years. On balance we believe it has been very worthwhile, but we hope they will not be necessary after Transmission Gully opens.

- **Paremata Station Parking**

Following lobbying by Paremata Residents Association, GWRC funded the construction of around 70 extra car parks at Paremata rail station, to be completed by the end of July last year. However ground water was found in some parts of the parking area that affected ground stability. Work stopped while a solution was designed and after a very long delay, the new parking area eventually opened just before Christmas.

In the meantime, streets and carparks in the area became clogged with parked cars, particularly around Paremata School, causing disruption and safety concerns at school start/finish times.

- **Parking on Paremata Crescent**

We worked with PCC traffic safety staff to agree changes to parking restrictions on Paremata Crescent around Paremata School, and extension of the no-parking yellow lines through to Brora Crescent to improve safety on that narrow stretch of Papakowhai Road.

- **Mana Clearways**

Your Association has been lobbying the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) for some time to include Sunday clearway restrictions in the northbound lane due to unacceptable traffic queues.

Towards the end of last year they decided that some changes to the clearway hours on Mana Esplanade were needed due to changes in peak traffic and congestion at weekends and public holidays. We suggested small changes to the proposed clearway hours to improve consistency, which I am pleased to say were accepted. The new clearway hours took effect on 6 April this year.

- **Local Body Elections - Candidates Meeting**

In September last year the Association arranged and ran a meeting for mayoral candidates, PCC northern ward candidates and GWRC Tawa-Porirua candidates for the November local body elections. Most candidates attended and made a short presentation followed by questions from the floor. The meeting was very well attended by residents with the room at full capacity.

- **Porirua Draft District Plan**

In November last year the Association made a submission on the **draft** District Plan. One of the key issues we objected to was the proposed rezoning of large parts of the Paremata and Mana suburban residential zone to a new Medium Density Residential Zone. This change would allow terraced housing and apartment buildings up to 3 stories high and introduce other restrictive conditions, such as reduced distance from the road and frontal appearance. The existing village character of the area would be irretrievably lost.

Another key issue was the plan to change the south-western commercial area of Mana Esplanade to Mixed Use Zone. That change would allow big box retail and light industrial activities. We believe that big box retail belongs in the CBD (Mega Centre) and the odour, dust, fumes and noise from light industry doesn't fit with residential and other activities already present.

Other matters raised included resilience issues, infrastructure and future transport needs, and removal of barriers (e.g. RMA) to protecting Porirua Harbour.

In November we have the opportunity to submit on the **proposed** District Plan. At first glance it appears few of the concerns we previously raised have resulted in change. Of concern now is the Government's National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD enacted August 2020) that is not reflected in the proposed District Plan. One policy in the NPS is for at least 6 storey residential buildings within a "walkable distance" of a rapid transport hub. (e.g. railway station).

Council must give effect to the NPS policies in the District Plan. It is also expected that Council will put limitations and constraints around that policy, but at this stage everything is uncertain.

- **Consultation on Aotea Lagoon park & reserve**

In March this year your Association provided input to the community survey on Aotea Lagoon. Currently a development plan for the park is being prepared and we expect to be given the opportunity to comment on it in the first quarter next year.

Contamination of the duck pond was one common area of comment. In September last year we met with Council Parks staff and presented a proposal for a community led clean-up of algae in the pond and reinstatement of oxygenating pumps and pipework to restore water quality. It was rejected based on health and safety concerns, and because the Council is planning to fill in the pond in 22/23. A resource consent application has been lodged with Greater Wellington. In the meantime the duck pond is an eyesore, a health and safety concern next to the children's play area, and algae from it continues to flow into the lagoon.

- **Other Dolly Varden Issues**

- This year, there have been a number of issues for Dolly Varden reserve and the inlet. Rabbits had become prolific and created a nuisance by digging holes along the reserve. We contacted the City Council and Greater Wellington for a solution. Greater Wellington has assessed the severity of the problem and provided advice on possible eradication methods.
- Another issue is Council staff determination to erect a barrier onto the reserve from the right of way between 34 and 36 the Esplanade. The aim is to prevent vehicles using the right of way to drive onto the reserve, despite drive-on access to the reserve is also possible from the beach. Many residents and groups use the right of way onto the reserve for family and group activities and launching boats etc. Some residents backing onto the reserve also need this access

occasionally for property maintenance, removal of waste, or access to boats, caravans or trailers. A meeting of local residents was held with the Council Parks Manager and alternatives put forward. The current preference of Council staff is a barrier using bollards.

- Algae and black swans have both become an unwelcome nuisance on the inlet, particularly along the Dolly Varden beach and out from the Paremata Railway Station. We understand the discharge of sewage into the inlet is contributing to the growth of algae, which causes unpleasant smells over a wide area. The black swan's faeces also add to pollution in the inlet.

• **Plimmerton Farm Plan Change 18**

The Association submitted on the proposed Plimmerton Farm development of around 2,000 houses and made a presentation to the Hearings Panel in October 2020. Our submission focussed on issues that would have an impact on our residents, such as inadequate wastewater infrastructure, increased traffic, parking, need for public transport, and siltation of the inlet.

Wastewater pipes from Pukerua Bay to the CBD were laid in 1950/60's suitable for the population forecast at the time. Since then there has been considerable residential growth (e.g. Whitby, Aotea and Papakowhai). The result is we now have an old, undersized wastewater system that also suffers from extreme storm water inflows, and in heavy rain, overflows of dilute sewage in Mana Esplanade that flows into the inlet. The wastewater pipes need urgent replacement and upgrade. Adding effluent from the proposed 2,000 houses of Plimmerton Farm into this system before it is replaced is not acceptable. We will be interested to read the Hearings Panel report and decision.

• **NZTA Consultation**

Environment Court approval to install clearways along Mana Esplanade required NZTA to consult with Paremata Residents Association along with other stakeholders on specific matters prior to Transmission Gully Motorway opening. The ten matters are shown on the reverse side of the AGM notice to residents, with background and our initial thoughts covered in the "Initial Thoughts" paper available from our website home page.

These matters range from road ownership (NZTA is proposing to retain SH1 but SH58 from Paremata to Pauatahanui to become a local road), to the detailed form and use of Mana Esplanade. NZTA will start consultation with your Association next month, so it is important that the community's aspirations and preferences are known. For this reason we have asked for feedback from residents and discussion on the subject will be a valuable part of this year's AGM.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the activities of the current Executive Committee and the work carried out for this community over the last year:

Russell Morrison (Vice President), Francesse Middleton (Treasurer), Caroline Van Halderen and Maureen Gillon (Co-Secretaries), Coralie Morrison (Media), Ian Barlow, Ray Baker-Underhill, Lorraine Taylor, Bruce Collins

Earlier this year Rabeea Inayatullah resigned from the Committee due to other commitments.

I want to recognise the involvement of Jenny Brash, Greater Wellington Councillor and Josh Trlin, Porirua City Councillor, Josh became involved after last year's election. Both regularly attend our committee meetings and provide valuable updates. I also recognise the input and help from Council's Village Planning Team.

And again this year we are grateful for the continued assistance of Euon Murrell and Tommy's Real Estate for printing our newsletters and leaflets. We really appreciate the support.

Tony Shaw

President, Paremata Residents Association