

Rodney Local Board LED Funding



Background

Last year the North West District Business Association put forward a proposal for funding to the Rodney Local Board based on piloting a new transport initiative (North West Country Access Project) over the summer season 2016-2017 in conjunction with the Local Board, Woodhill Forest owners - Nga Maunga Whakahii o Kaiprara and a number of key North West tourism operators.

The proposal for the North West Country Access project was to trial a daily service to transport visitors from the Auckland CBD to businesses / attractions in the North West Country area – effectively a “tour” bus on a daily basis over the coming summer period (November – April 2017).

At the time the Local Board granted \$19,000 from its LED funds for the project however, even though the trial proceeded, due to a number of circumstances, the \$19,000 LB funds were not uplifted by the Association.

When we initially launched the service, we discovered that there was really no up-take from what we thought was our target market – international backpackers, despite widespread promotion of the service amongst youth hostels and hotels with opportunity for pick-ups offered daily and brochures widely distributed.

We then explored some other options with local tourism providers around expanding the service to three different areas including producing venue / attraction specific brochures that could be used to promote to their potential and existing client base as a way of getting customers to their site; developing local tours focused around Adventure and Discovery and making the Shuttle available for hire to all businesses in the area.

While there was some uptake by visitors wanting to visit the region using the van to reach some of the tourism operators, sadly it wasn't sufficient to enable to service to be economically viable beyond the trial and with the change in direction from one of our key sponsors, it was decided to end the trial and sell the van.

Re-allocation of LB funds for Mobile App

As the LED funds were not required for this project, and because we understand the funds need to be re-allocated by the Local Board for another project which can be completed by the end of this financial year, the North West District Business Association would like to propose another project for these funds.

The Association would like to support the development of a Mobile App which would be used as part of our tourism strategy to promote the greater North West area as well as for local businesses to use as a “Buy Local” campaign for the benefit of the North West area, with the ability to add other functions at a later stage.

Michael Baxter from Utopia has been developing a concept which has the support of the NWDBA Committee.

The key components of the app are:

- The App will be free and people can download it and register to use it using Facebook or using an email address.
- Once connected users can see their points and obtain prizes. Points will be awarded by scanning QR codes at NWDBA member locations
- A way to promote the wider North West area and its businesses and attractions
- Map of the area with markers for each participating location and ability to integrate with Google maps
- Information about the North West district and each township
- A back office system will be built to provide Management of users (update details; manually update points etc), push out campaign / specials to all users, select winners and provide electronic feedback to them and email reports to all locations of how many people have come through and scanned their QR code

The entire system will be designed to be stand-alone so it can be easily taken up by other organisations to use for their areas. Once the project is given the green light to proceed, the development of the app will take 4-6 weeks.

Some early visual concepts are below.



A quote for the development of the app from initial concept to a full functioning app which can be downloaded on both the Apple Store and Google Play store has been obtained from Utopia for the development of the App for \$13,000.

A further \$3,000 will enable interactive trails integrated with google maps to be added to the Mobile App and the Association would like to commit \$3,000 to promoting the app in appropriate media channels and via Facebook sponsored adverts

The North West District Business Association would appreciate consideration being given by the Rodney Local Board to allowing the \$19,000 of LED funds to be used to fund this project.