

Media Release: St Heliers/Glendowie Residents Association & St Heliers Business Association joint response to proposed Auckland Transport changes to the St Heliers Shopping Precinct

For Immediate Release/Date: 12 April

Auckland Transport has formally proposed the following changes to the St Heliers shopping precinct and the roads in the surrounding areas:

- A reduced speed limit from 50 kph to 30 kph
- The addition of 12 new pedestrian crossings in the area - giving a proposed new total of 15 overall
- A reduction in car park stock in the precinct by 40 spaces

The proposed changes would equate to a \$1.3 million cost of ratepayer/taxpayer money.

Having discussed the proposed initiative, representatives from the St Heliers/Glendowie Residents Association, Orakei Local Board and St Heliers Business Association, in conjunction with Councillor Desley Simpson and MP for Tamaki Simon O'Connor, have formed a preliminary working group to respond. Following significant review of the proposal and soliciting feedback from community members and stakeholders, we offer the below collective response to Auckland Transport.

Auckland Transport's reasoning for these changes is based on the idea that 80% of all deaths and serious injuries within Auckland occur on 50km/h local urban roads. However, within the St Heliers precinct speeds rarely exceed an average of 35km/h, and there have been zero fatalities and negligible injuries on roads in the area within the last five years¹ – meaning St Heliers sits significantly below the city-wide risk average². Furthermore, the NZTA Crash compendium highlights there is no crash reduction on 50km/h roadways where pedestrian crossings are installed – the addition of 12 superfluous crossings in the precinct would only serve to create needless gridlock.

Based on these facts and reported accident rates, we feel that AT's plan as it currently stands would have no effect whatsoever on accident rates in the area – especially given how low these rates already are. For an estimated ratepayer/taxpayer expenditure of \$1.3 million, these changes would be ineffective in accomplishing AT's intended goal of increased road safety in Auckland - changes would be more effectively administered in areas such as Glen Innes and Panmure, which both have a significantly higher fatality and injury rates.

Further to this, it is our concern that AT has provided no economic impact review to accurately assess the effect on the precinct or its business owners. Having already lost six parks in the area following AT's bus route changes in late 2018, their proposed plan would mean an almost 20% loss of car park stock in the St Heliers business precinct. Daytime parking in this area is already at a premium, so these proposed changes would have a significant impact on the accessibility and profitability of our local businesses. Retail competition for the area is high with Sylvia Park Mall, the Lunn Ave shopping precinct and the recently remodelled Eastridge Complex in close proximity – all with an abundance of free accessible parking.

After reviewing AT's plan against the information available, we would suggest the measures below as a more cost-effective and successful alternative.

- No additional pedestrian crossings, with the potential to change the one pedestrian refuge nearest the city to a raised pedestrian crossing with 'Welcome to St Heliers' signage.

¹ 3 serious injuries, 7 minor injuries total on the last 5 years in St Heliers Village and adjacent Tamaki Drive. Statistics sourced from AT and the NZTA Crash Data Base

² Based on 2017 annual death and injury rates in Auckland; 64 people killed on Auckland roads in 2017, 749 people were seriously injured on Auckland roads in 2017. Statistics sourced from AT and the NZTA Crash Data Base

- Implementation of other mechanisms to unobtrusively enforce speed reduction e.g. textured road surfaces, speed cameras, additional signage.
- A thorough review of the lower half of St Heliers Bay road for speed control.
- Maintaining the current car parking stock to prevent any negative impact on local businesses or accessibility issues.
- Remove current AT proposals from the table and form a working group madeup of Auckland Transport, Residents Association and Business Association to develop a joint proposal on a mutually agreed upon timeline.

This plan could be effectively enacted for a lot less than \$300,000 – saving Auckland ratepayers/taxpayers in excess of \$1 million in wasted infrastructure expenditure to combat a safety problem that doesn't exist in the area.

We look forward to working more closely with Auckland Transport to deliver a plan that better protects not only the people of St Heliers, but also the interests of the community as a whole – without incurring any needless expenditure.

St Heliers/Glendowie Residents Association

St Heliers Business Association

Kit Parkinson – Chairman Orakei Local Board

Councillor Desley Simpson

MP For Tamaki Simon O'Connor