

ST HELIERS VILLAGE IMPROVED SAFETY PROPOSALS

ORAKEI LOCAL BOARD FEEDBACK

29th April 2019

General Points:

- The Board is concerned that the infrastructure changes proposed for local centres has not been publicly consulted widely and visibly, and that this should have formed part of, and been run in conjunction with, the speed reduction consultation. Local business owners should have had the opportunity to provide local input on the proposed designs.
- The Board cannot support the degree of loss of carparking these proposed work will entail. The businesses of St Heliers cannot sustain the economic loss that will result from the lack of available parking.
- The Board is opposed to unnecessary installation of pedestrian crossings and speed simply as a means to enforce any proposed new speed limit.
- The Board supports safer pedestrian crossing facilities at the Cliff Rd/Vale Rd/Tamaki Drive intersection, although it questions the current design as being an optimum solution.
- The Board supports safer pedestrian crossing facilities on Tamaki Drive west of the Village between The Parade and Auckland Rd from Vellenoweth Green to the seaward side of Tamaki Drive.
- Any speed tables/ threshold treatments installed on Tamaki Drive should be designed to ensure safe navigability for cyclists, and be of a height that does not unduly impair traffic flow.
- The Board supports widening of the existing shared paths.
- The Board questions Auckland Transport's Death and Serious Injury statistics when compared against the NZTA Crash Analysis Data for St Heliers Town Centre as justifying the extent of these proposed works.
- The AECOM Report supporting the safety improvement recommendations for the St Heliers Village contains errors of fact and is therefore flawed.
- The Board is concerned that no reference has been made to the Tamaki Drive Masterplan throughout the consultation process, nor does it appear to have been considered when formulating these proposals.

Further comment on the bullet points as follows:

Loss of Car Parking:

The loss of upwards of an additional 32 car parking spaces in the St Heliers Village and the detrimental impact this will have on economic viability for the commercial area is unacceptable.

The Board received mixed feedback from the wider community regarding the proposed speed limit reduction, but the feedback with respect to the multiple and wide-ranging road infrastructure changes in the St Heliers Village/Town Centre which will be implemented to give effect to the speed reduction measures has been very clear. The magnitude of these changes - in particular the loss of the substantial number of car parking spaces - has been very strongly opposed by local residents and businesses.

When the New Bus Network for the central region was implemented in July 2018, new bus stops and layover points were installed in or near the St Heliers Town Centre resulting in the net loss of 8 carparks. Considerable concern was expressed at the time of consultation on these recent works by the St Heliers Residents' and Business Associations that even this

amount of car parking loss would have severe impact - not only on the convenience aspect for a predominantly elderly catchment of visitors who use the shops, doctors' rooms, public library, and other amenities provided by the centre - but also the ongoing economic viability of the commercial area itself. It is a further blow to this community to be facing a loss of between 20-25% of car parking in the St Heliers business area.

An unintended consequence that does not appear to have been considered is the negative impact loss of parking would have on the three sports clubs on St Heliers Reserve - St Heliers Bowling Club, Croquet Club, and Tennis Club.

Safety:

Although Auckland Transport emphasises the priority of safety for all road users in these proposals, in some of these commercial and nearby residential streets the movement of buses for repositioning for route changes, is creating significant danger for pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists. Despite the Board raising these matters with Auckland Transport the responses have not focussed on any element of safety but instead on the need to avoid delays due to other road users. The proposed infrastructure changes to the Village will only exacerbate this problem with the buses.

The Board does not support the large number of additional pedestrian crossings within the Village centre itself, but does support the installation of two new pedestrian crossings at either end of that part of Tamaki Drive which is proposed for a reduced speed limit. It strongly supports proposed changes at the Cliff Rd/ Vale Rd/ Tamaki Drive intersection to enable safer pedestrian access to St Heliers beach and the very popular and well used playground adjacent. An analysis of the NZTA crash data shows that although there have been fewer incidents at or near this location, they have been more serious, supporting the rationale for safety improvements here.

Singling out the two areas of St Heliers and Mission Bay on the basis of dubious interpretation of the statistics, while other similar areas such as Ellerslie and Remuera townships are excluded, is inconsistent and anomalous.

The AECOM report states that over the 5 year period 2013 – 2017 St Heliers experienced 36 crashes. Examination of this data shows that the majority of these crashes were in the existing 'slow speed' sector of the Village where it is already near impossible for vehicle drivers to travel at speeds above 30km hr due to congestion and slow traffic movement. The data itself shows that the incidents in the streets where businesses are located are predominantly 'fender bender' type situations. In comparison, the data indicates that although there have been fewer incidents on the outer perimeter of the Village – ie Cliff Rd – these have been more serious in nature and resulted in actual harm to vulnerable road users. This could be due to the steepness of Cliff Rd resulting in downhill vehicles travelling at speeds more likely to result in serious injury or death on collision with other road users.

Cycling Safety:

St Heliers Bay/Tamaki Drive intersection has been identified as a high incident intersection for cyclists. An additional location identified by cycling groups as problematic is the Cliff Road/ Vale Road/Lombard Street intersection where the Board supports additional safety improvements. Cyclists also report 'dooring' as an ongoing problem along Tamaki Drive, where disembarking vehicle passengers open car doors without checking, creating an immediate unforeseen hazard for cyclists in motion.

Moving crossing points and bus stops further away from intersections, in addition to the lower speed of 30 km/h will help with cycling safety. Installing crossing points at, or near 'grade', with illuminated in-road studs on Tamaki Drive would provide a consistent and welcome safety improvement, providing better visibility of crossing points for motorists and consistency for cyclists.

The Board is aware of significant concern amongst the cycling community that the works will create a series of dangerous “pinch points” for road cyclists.

The Board notes that Auckland Transport’s own design guidelines recommend protected bikeways where traffic flows, as well as traffic speeds exceed a certain level. With current usage for Tamaki Drive already well in excess of those guidelines, including in St Heliers, this should have been taken into consideration.

Operating Speeds – St Heliers:

The Board has considered the Operating Speed data for Tamaki Drive and St Heliers Village streets - Polygon Rd, Goldie St, Maheke St, St Heliers Bay Rd, Turau St, Lombard St, Vale Rd, and Cliff Rd that was presented to the public at consultation events. This data indicates that the average vehicle speed in 6 of these streets is currently already less than 30km per hour. This clearly shows that the proposals are not supported by the need to reduce speed.

The Board questions the validity of the average operating speed data with respect to St Heliers Bay Rd which indicates an average speed of 40-44 km/hr. We suggest that this result is somewhat skewed by the inclusion of the stretch of St Heliers Bay Rd between Polygon Rd and Devore St which is on a steep hill, where vehicles are often travelling at excessive speed before they enter the Village. The Board fields regular complaints about speeding at this location, and a driver feedback sign was installed to try to modify behaviour. We suggest that if measurement was taken of the speeds on the separate section of St Heliers Bay Rd between Polygon Rd and Tamaki Drive on the flat within the Village itself there would be a very different result. Both sides of St Heliers Bay Rd in this location have angled parking, and there are often pedestrians crossing back and forth, and cars circling slowly to try and find a car parking space. Motorist behaviour on these two separate sections of St Heliers Bay Rd is quite different yet this has not been taken into account.

Operating Speed Data:

The Board has constantly questioned the reliability of AT’s speed and accident statistics which they have relied on for its proposed safety works. This is clearly shown as follows:

The data on operating speeds presented by Auckland Transport in the public consultation on the proposals does not align with the data on operating speeds contained in the preliminary design AECOM Report prepared for Auckland Transport on which it has based its recommendations.

The Board considers it extraordinary that AT expects the Board and the wider public to be able to give appropriate feedback when it is unclear on what statistics AT is in fact using at all. The two tables annexed to this feedback marked “A” & “B” clearly show these discrepancies and exhibit two quite different sets of driver behaviour.

The Board therefore cannot accept that there has been a robust enough study done of the operating speeds in the St Heliers Village and environs which justifies the extent of the changes and does not accept that it has been adequately proven that excessive speed is the primary cause of the vast majority of minor collisions within the St Heliers Town Centre. Having examined the crash statistics on which the Speed Reduction proposal is based, a \$1.3 million spend on substantial changes to the built road environment seems extravagant and unnecessary. It is clear that in St Heliers, most accidents that are predominantly minor car versus car incidents, are due to driver carelessness rather than excessive speed.

Roundabout – Polygon Rd/ St Heliers Bay Intersection – Pedestrian Crossings

The Board acknowledges that this location is a significant ‘gateway’ to the St Heliers Village, and experiences considerable traffic volumes.

However the proposed additional 3 pedestrian crossings at this location appears an over-engineered solution for a problem that does not exist, potentially creating more safety issues that it proposes to fix as bottle necking occurs and vehicles potentially straddle the crossing forcing pedestrians to navigate their way between static and slow moving vehicles. It is the Board's view that the single pedestrian crossing currently in place suffices to ensure pedestrian safety at this location.

Cliff Rd/Vale Rd/Tamaki Drive

This can be a confusing intersection for motorists and other road users caused by 3 separate roads Cliff, Vale and Lombard converging with the extension of Vale Rd through to commencement of Tamaki Drive. While the crash statistics for this location indicated fewer crashes they have been or a more serious nature than those nearer the town centre. The Board therefore supports better crossing facilities here though questions the layout and configuration of what is proposed.

Pedestrian Crossing – Between The Parade & Auckland Rd:

It is the Board's view that the current pedestrian refuge on Tamaki situated midway on the northern boundary of Vellenoweth Green is inadequate. Given the overhanging vegetation from the very large pohutakawa, age and colour of the structure, and lack of alerting road markings it is not easily visible to motorists.

There is opportunity here to incorporate a "placemaking element" in terms of a "Village Entrance", however the Board questions the need for 2 pedestrian crossings in close proximity to each other between The Parade and Goldie Street.

Shared Path Widening:

The Board supports the widening of the Shared Pathway – particularly at the toilet block/ boat ramp section of Tamaki Drive where different users groups struggle to share the space as they move in different directions often having to also take into account vehicles traversing the shared pathway as they enter & exit the boat ramp.

Consultation Process:

The Board is deeply disappointed that the speed limit consultation did not include reference to, or enable feedback on, the substantial infrastructure changes in St Heliers Village that support of 30km/hr will mandate

The Board has been concerned with the manner in which the speed limit reduction proposal and proposed safety improvement for both St Heliers Village and the Mission Bay Town Centres have been presented to the public in the consultation process. It was disingenuous in particular, to separate the consultation on the speed limit reduction from the consultation on the proposed changes to the roading environment in both Mission Bay and the St Heliers Village. The two matters, although being consulted on separately are inextricably linked. We note with concern the recommendations in the AECOM report to Auckland Transport that the means of ensuring the adherence to any proposed speed limit reduction should be through the creation of the "self -explaining/ self- enforcing" road environment involving substantial changes to roading infrastructure and the removal of upwards of 32 carparks. Auckland Transport should be considering the option of simply reducing the speed limit, and then using normal enforcement process to enforce it. It is the Board's view that failure to consult on the two components simultaneously ie the reduction of speed, and the substantial traffic calming devices, is misleading. It has not been apparent to the members of the public giving support to the speed reduction that this may then be used as a mandate by Auckland Transport to also

implement the built roading infrastructure changes to the St Heliers Village, and Mission Bay town centres proposed.

It is entirely possible to have either a lower speed limit without the proposed infrastructure, or the proposed infrastructure without a lower speed limit. They are not necessarily both required. In St Heliers there is already very little capacity to drive any faster than approximately 30km/hr in any event during normal business hours when there is more likelihood to have the minor vehicle incidents which forms the basis for the report's recommendations.

AECOM REPORT to Auckland Transport:

The Board challenges the accuracy of the observations and conclusions of the AECOM report and notes with concern that there are so many errors of fact within, its value as an informative tool must be questioned.

Some specific examples of those inaccuracies are as follows:

- 2.2** Reference is made to "high speeds" being regularly observed along Polygon Road at the Turua Street / St Heliers Bay Road intersections. The lack of definition as to what the authors consider "high speed" results in this comment being of limited value.

Comment in the report is made that right turning vehicles into Polygon Road from Goldie Street are travelling at 'inappropriate speed'. Again this lacks sufficient definition. The turning capacity is severely restricted by existing build-outs and the Board challenges this observation. Vehicles customarily come to a standstill before navigating in and out of Polygon Road at this intersection, given not only the limited available space, and proximity of parked cars and other vehicles waiting to make their turn.

- 2.6** The statement that there is "time-based pay and display" parking on Tamaki Drive is incorrect. There is currently no metered parking along Tamaki Drive. The Board is opposed to the installation of "pay and display" machines in the commercial areas of St Heliers and Mission Bay, and along Tamaki Drive.

- 2.9** Special Events – Round the Bays is not a village community activity and terminates at Vellenoweth Green which is outside the parameters of the St Heliers Town Centre.

Vellenoweth Green and The Parade have been included within the scope of the report notwithstanding they do not form part of the designated St Heliers Town Centre.

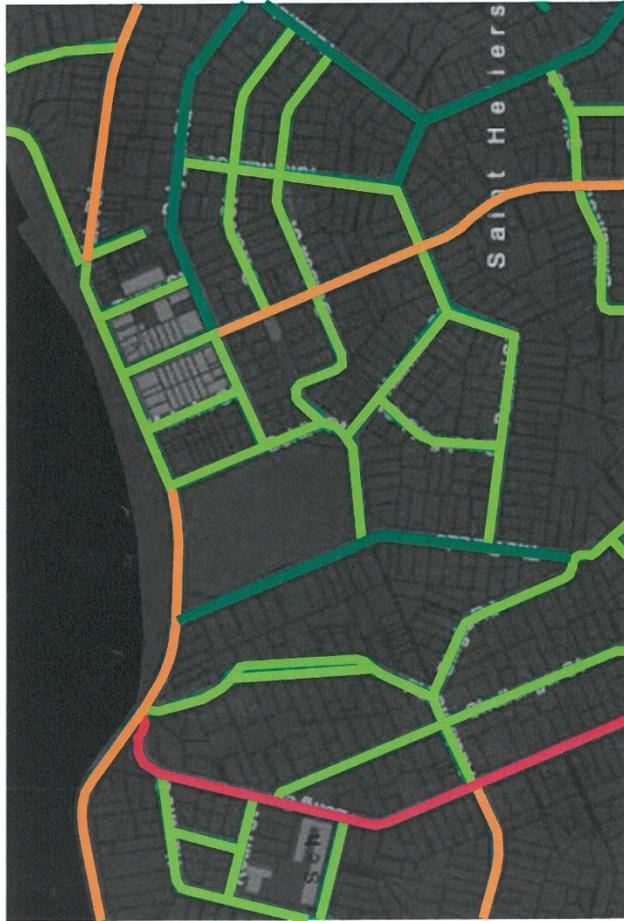
- 3.0** Concept Design Principles. In particular, the Board does not agree with the statement made in the AECOM report as follows:

"It is important to note that for successful implementation of a safe transportation system in the village area the speed reduction must be self-explaining and self-enforcing. The low cost posting of speed limit signs alone will not achieve the desired safety outcome for all users. The physical road environment must undergo change to lead drivers to appropriately change their speed when travelling through the village." (AECOM ST Heliers Village 30km/h Speed Measures Report)

Tamaki Drive Masterplan:

As a general principle, the Board welcomes safer streetscapes in our Local Board area that enable our residents to move around using various transports modes safely and easily. We are concerned however that the designs for these proposed works do not adequately reflect the Tamaki Drive Masterplan in creating adequate separation of pedestrians and cyclists. With the proliferation of scooters as an alternative transport mode, and the everincreasing demands on Tamaki Drive the need for safe and separated biking facilities is more urgent than ever. Any works should be future-proofed to allow for implementation of the Tamaki Drive Masterplan. The Board is disappointed that The Tamaki Drive Masterplan has not been considered in the AECOM Report, nor referenced as part of the consultation process.

Annexure "A"



Light Green	<30kph
Dark Green	30 - 34kph
Orange	35 - 39kph
Red	40 - 44kph

National Operating Speed St Heliers Local Centre

