

New traffic trial for Matiatia

The local board has endorsed a plan to improve congestion at Matiatia ferry terminal after weeks of back-and-forth with Auckland Transport (AT). The draft concept plan, on which AT consulted with the Waiheke Transport Forum and the local board will move the public pick up/drop off area to the 30-minute parking area. A new taxi stand will replace the current drop-offs while two new bus stops will replace the current taxi areas. The plan is designed to cater to an increase in buses travelling to and from the ferry terminal with the advent of the new bus network.

When *Gulf News* asked local board chairperson Cath Handley whether she thinks the plan benefits tourists and visitors to the island more than residents, she said, "The aim has been to keep everyone safer. I do think, yes, it advantages people who are catching buses and taxis to get away. I don't think any of these things are ever ideal for everybody."

At last week's local board meeting, AT representative Johnathan Anyon said "No taxis will go in the keyhole whatsoever."

"A head-on taxi rank will be created on the left-hand side of the road and a space on the right-hand side of the road will be available for pre-booked vehicles - we will install advisory signs."

These changes mean the keyhole will cater solely to buses including Fullers Explorer vehicles.

"Fullers' double-decker buses get prime position directly outside the automatic doors of the terminal initially

designed for our residents with mobility challenges," deputy chairperson Paul Walden, who was absent from the most recent board meeting, wrote in a letter to the editor this week.

"Visitors using taxis and shuttles get the benefit of the covered walkway to our pick up and drop off area and our school children, workers and elders will be left to brave the elements from the lower car park."

"This is a draft plan that was developed jointly with the Waiheke Transport Forum and the local board - it's not something that AT is foisting on Waiheke. It's a local plan, developed by locals, to address a local problem."

- AT media representative, Natalie Polley

Moving the public pick up/drop off area to the second row of the 30-minute car park area means 38 parks will be displaced and users will need to walk further to get to the ferry terminal. The six mobility parks currently in the second bay will be moved to the first. In the third parking bay, 18 existing parks will need to be re-angled

to enable safe parking.

AT says there will be no net loss of parking spaces as new parks will be opened up in the rental car area. A timeline for the demolition of the two rental car buildings has not yet been decided.

Waiheke junior cricket club administrator Rachael Wheeler says the loss of so many 30-minute parks and the pick up/drop off zone close to the ferry terminal building will be an inconvenience for sports teams.

"When we drop the team off, we park in the 30-minute parks, and if there isn't enough parking in that area it will be more difficult. I think there needs to be a place that's handy to do a short stop; otherwise, people will just park illegally, particularly when dropping people off."

At the board meeting last week, member Shirin Brown questioned the consultation process, asking why iwi and groups such as Direction Matiatia weren't given a say.

Following the board meeting, AT media representative Natalie Polley told *Gulf News*: "This is a draft plan that was developed jointly with the Waiheke Transport Forum and the local board - it's not something that AT is foisting on Waiheke. It's a local plan, developed by locals, to address a local problem."

Despite this, there has been no public consultation on the trial, which comes after two previous years in which attempts to improve congestion in the area were not deemed successful.

Ms Handley says there was more varied input this year compared to the two



Waiheke Weather

Supplied by Weatherwise Auckland, 020 4023 0106

23 - 29 Sept 2019	Rainfall mm		Maximum temperature °C		Minimum temperature °C	
	Waiheke	Auckland	Waiheke	Auckland	Waiheke	Auckland
Monday	1.0	5.0	18.9	16.9	12.7	12.7
Tuesday	9.0	14.0	15.5	15.7	9.0	9.8
Wednesday	10.0	10.0	14.8	16.7	8.0	9.7
Thursday	2.0	1.5	14.5	15.1	9.0	11.0
Friday	1.5	0.5	16.1	18.4	10.6	10.9
Saturday	0.0	1.0	18.0	17.7	10.4	9.3
Sunday	0.0	0.5	17.7	20.9	13.6	14.0
Weekly Total	23.5	32.5				
September Total	112.5	163.5				
Weekly ave			16.5	17.3	10.5	11.1
September Hist Ave	89.5	114.7	17.2	17.3	9.9	9.9