

Te Puke Town Centre Upgrade Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why was the town centre upgrade project undertaken?

The project is an outcome of two concurrent processes:

- The 2015 community review of Te Puke's 20 Year Development Plan which identified the need to "create an attractive and vibrant atmosphere in the town centre"
- The upgrade of the Te Puke Highway and the town centre linked to revocation of the road to Council as part of the development of the Tauranga Eastern Link (and associated project funding from NZTA)

For more information on project background go to our website:

www.westernbay.govt.nz/Te-Puke-upgrades

2. What are the main goals of the project?

- Make the Te Puke Highway fit for purpose as an important local road
- Improve the safety, look and feel and functionality of the town centre for motorists and pedestrians.

3. What are the main features of the project?

- Changing the two lane highway to a single through lane with a parking aisle, making it easier to park and improve pedestrian safety – only one lane to cross at a time
- A new roundabout at Boucher Ave intersection to improve access and traffic flows
- Kerb and channel, footpath, signage and other physical enhancements
- A defined linkage from the walkway across Jellicoe St
- Improving sight lines, pedestrian areas, gathering places and general town ambience
- Landscaping, planting and street furniture improvements
- Reduced street maintenance
- Better signage, lighting and security
- Funded by NZTA

4. How have project decisions been made?

A Project Control Group (PCG) was established to provide community oversight of the project. This group consisted of a Community Board Member, a Councillor and representatives from the retail and industrial sectors, Te Puke Economic Development Group, the design consultant Boffa-Miskell and Council staff. This group reviewed feedback from public consultation (mid November 2015 - February 2016) and fed this into reports prepared for first the Community Board and then Council which is the ultimate decision making body.

5. What options were considered?

Three concepts were prepared for public consideration through an open day, display at Te Puke Library and for online feedback: Option 1 retained the two through lanes; Option 2 was single-laning between the roundabouts; and Option 3 was single lane from King St to Boucher Ave. Option 3 was the public's preferred option. Traffic modelling showed the extended single laning option did not work so two-laning at the roundabouts was maintained to ensure good traffic flows.

6. What are the current traffic flows for Te Puke?

Volumes from August 2016 traffic flow monitoring shows approximately 13,500 vehicles per day with approximately 4 percent of these being heavy commercial vehicles. Volumes through Te Puke prior to the TEL motorway, showed approximately 18,700 vehicles with 10% heavy commercial vehicles.

7. What if the new traffic system doesn't work?

Council has committed to reviewing the new traffic layout on completion of the works to see if it has achieved what it set out to. A review panel will be created and is likely to have representatives from the retail and commercial sectors, Community Board, Councillors and Council. The terms of reference for this group have yet to be determined, but the expectation is that they will survey a wide sector of the community, determine findings and report these to Council and the community so that any further changes necessary to improve traffic flows and safety are identified and/or in a worst case scenario if the new system completely fails it can be reversed.

Please note that the benefits from these types of projects usually take time to be realised so this review process is likely to need to be done soon after the project's completion and then six months later to ensure accuracy of feedback.

In the longer term, a Te Puke internal bypass will be required as traffic volumes increase. This project will be included in the next Long Term Planning process; with planning for the project starting at the end of 2017. Timing for the construction of an internal bypass will be determined the growth of traffic numbers on the Te Puke Highway.

8. What signage will there be to warn road users of the new traffic layout?

Temporary warning signs at each end of the old two lane section of Jellicoe St are in place. Permanent additional signs such as "Merge Like a Zip" and merging signs will be installed during construction, however, driver courtesy will determine their effectiveness.

9. How many parking spaces will be lost?

It is expected there will be a total of 9 fewer parking spaces on the main street at the completion of the project - 6 between Jocelyn and Oxford St and 3 between Jocelyn and Boucher Ave. There remains a total of 144 car parks between Boucher Ave and King Street.

10. What are you doing to improve parking in Te Puke?

A review of parking in Te Puke is underway and will look at the parking habits and needs of a range of users such as residents, retailers and visitors. The outcome of the review will determine what further changes may happen in Te Puke around parking. It is expected recommendations will be available by the end of April 2017.

Additional signage will also be installed to show the location of alternative parking.

11. What has changed to the car parks? They feel different.

The angles of car parks have now been returned to a standard 45 degree angle and approximately 2.5m width, where previously some had been at odd angles and varying dimensions. Several new disability parking spaces have been added and they have also been standardised with new kerb crossings added.

- 12. What is the purpose of the open space at the Te Puke Heritage walkway?**
Part of the philosophy of the upgrade is to make it easier and more inviting for people to stop, shop and gather in Te Puke. This open space is an area that can be used for socialising and events, and is part of the link between the main street, Commerce Street and Jubilee park. Low timber screens and seating will be installed to complete the works.
- 13. How has the planting scheme been devised?**
Qualified landscape architects were engaged to identify plants and species that would best suit the environment and create visual interest without jeopardising the safety aspects of the project (such as sight lines at pedestrian crossings). Mainly native species have been used and people should expect some nice displays of colour once the plants become established. A flower bed of annuals adjacent to the pedestrian crossings are part of the planting scheme and will be a feature next summer.
- 14. How many pedestrian crossings will there be?**
Three formal crossings:
 - the existing crossing
 - a crossing adjacent Palmer Place
 - a crossing outside Council offices.The informal crossings also remain. Each pedestrian crossing will be fitted with new lighting, signage and a monitoring camera to help identify issues that may arise at the crossing.
- 15. Why is this one lane system working when the 1997 trial failed?**
Computer traffic modelling now being used identified that a single lane system through town needed dual lanes around the roundabouts to ensure traffic flowed. This was not realised in 1997 when a single lane was installed throughout town.
- 16. Why was there no on-site trial?**
The trial system was completed within the computer model. The initially selected one lane option (Option 3) failed with excessive congestion and delays. The model was then adjusted to ensure that it would work on the ground. This became Option 3A with dual lanes around the roundabouts as installed on site.
- 17. What are the expected outcomes of the traffic modelling?**
The traffic modelling was based on volumes of approximately 15,000 vehicles per day. This was increased by 20 percent with 15 percent of these heavy commercial vehicles. At these levels, the model predicts some congestion at peak times of the day that will clear relatively quickly.
- 18. What is happening to speed through town?**
The old two-lane layout had high speeds with the 85th percentile vehicle speed at approximately 48kph. The next speed and volume survey is programmed for late March 2017 after construction is complete. Average speeds through town are expected to have dropped.
- 19. Will trucks carrying houses still be allowed to come through town?**
Te Puke Highway is still designated as an over dimension vehicle route. Council is currently working with the industry and NZTA to change this route to enable these vehicles to use the new TEL motorway.

20. When potholes appear in new road surfaces, who pays?

The contractor carries liability for early failure, e.g. potholes are repaired at their cost, not Council's.