

Taupō District Council

Notes of Council Workshop

Group	Council
Date	Tuesday 13 August 2024, 10.30am – 11.55am
Venue	Council Chambers
Topic	Functioning of Roberts Street
Facilitated by	Infrastructure Manager (R Stokes), Project Manager Stakeholder Specialist (T Perry), Senior Analyst Business Transformation (T Paget)
Elected Members present	Mayor David Trewavas, Deputy Mayor Cr Kevin Taylor, Cr Duncan Campbell, Cr Sandra Greenslade (via MS Teams), Cr Kylie Leonard, Cr Danny Loughlin, Cr Anna Park, Cr Christine Rankin (via MS Teams until 11.17am) Cr Rachel Shepherd, Cr Kirsty Trueman, Cr Yvonne Westerman, Cr John Williamson
Officers present	Chief Executive (J Gardyne), General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services (T Hale), General Manager People and Community Partnerships (L O'Brien), Infrastructure Manager (R Stokes), Project Management Office Manager (P Fletcher), Project Manager Stakeholder Specialist (T Perry), Senior Analyst Business Transformation (T Paget), Executive Manager Mayors Office (J Later), Communications Specialist (A Taylor), Landscape Architect (F Scott), Team Lead Transportation Operations (I Cruz), Asset Manager Transportation (C Sharland), Road Safety Co-ordinator (S Wraight), Asset Engineer – Transport (I Nikitin), Asset Data Specialist – Transport (O Clarke), Asset Engineer – Transport (A Dahal), Senior Solicitor (K Hollman), Legal and Governance Coordinator (D Periam)
Public / media present	Julie McLeod - General Manager, Towncentre Taupō
Documents either pre-circulated or tabled	Powerpoint Presentation (A3612893)
Public or closed¹	Public

¹ Workshops are public (and are always advertised whether public or closed), unless there is a good reason(s) for information to be withheld and there is no overriding public interest in holding the workshop in public. Withholding grounds set out in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) are a guide. If closed, cite relevant LGOIMA section.

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Notes²

The purpose of this workshop was to discuss the functioning of Roberts Street between Tongariro and Ruapehu Streets including possible options for changes and activating Tapuaeharuru Reserve.

Tapuaeharuru Reserve Activation

The Project Manager Stakeholder Specialist explained that herself and the Senior Analyst Business Transformation had been tasked to investigate how the space had been activated and how this could be done better.

The key objective was to make the space a great place to hold events by ensuring it was a flexible and functional space. The activation of Tapuaeharuru had been limited even though the infrastructure was in place to support events.

The following points were explained:

- Since April 2023 there had been ten events booked and there was one more booked before December 2024.
- There were a couple factors which created difficulties in utilising Tapuaeharuru. First there was no strategy for the activation of Tapuaeharuru and secondly was there was not specific terms and conditions for bookings.
- Barriers to activation included paperwork, lack of awareness, shared zone traffic risk, potential increase in maintenance and unclear ownership.
- A survey found that the space was used for food and drink mostly, the public looked at the view in the space, and they would like to see the area become pedestrian only.
- After discussion with the Hamilton Central Business Association who looked after Garden Place in Hamilton, it was found that they face similar issues of traffic management as what is faced here.

The recommendations were:

1. Finalise terms and conditions for bookings
2. Change Roberts Street function
3. Develop district wide events strategy
4. Finalise pricing model
5. Allocate promotion responsibility

The following feedback from elected members was received:

- Agreed with a district wide events strategy.
- It was a great event space, and the V8 Supercars event went very well.
- Businesses in the area needed to be consulted with as events could have an impact on them.
- Ensure to include all business in the CBD are thought of and not just the businesses on the waterfront.

Roberts Street Functionality

The Infrastructure Manager explained the current issues with the space and potential options to solve some of these issues for elected members to consider and advise officers on how much work they should focus on. These issues included excessive travel speeds, long queues at peak times due to congestion at the exit onto Ruapehu Street, excessive traffic volumes as some drivers used it as a main travel route south, safety issues due to proximity to tables, amenity issues such as fumes and losses of views and traffic management conflict for events.

² Workshops are not decision-making forums, therefore this document contains notes of key points discussed only, not decisions.

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The following options were explained:

- Roberts Street could be left as status quo which would be at no cost. There had been an increase in the acceptance of the space and less traffic most days however the congestion issues identified would remain at peak periods.
- Another option was status quo parking and access, but with enhancements such as introducing speed reduction measures or a left turn only out onto Ruapehu Street, plus potential changes to dining leases to require barriers between tables and cars or see if digital navigation providers could remove the route from guidance southwards (while still having correct directions for KFC when typed into digital navigation).
- A third option was to remove the carparking which would reduce traffic demand as people would not be looking for a carpark however 23 carparks would be lost but this could be partially offset by adding three or more mobility parks on Ruapehu Street plus motorbike parks.
- A fourth option was to remove carparking and close most of Robert Street to normal through traffic and create a new access to the KFC drive by turning the second half of Robert Street into two lanes.

In answer to questions, the following was clarified:

- For the fourth option, customers would be able to turn around in front of KFC if needed.
- From previous discussions with KFC managers, the walk-in traffic for the restaurant had increased and the summer of 2023/24 was their best one yet.
- Roberts Street could not be completely closed because of the businesses, it was also needed for service trucks.
- There was no funding in the transport budget in the Long-term Plan 2024-34 so additional funding would be required if any major changes were to be made.

The following feedback from elected members was received:

- Option four would be a drastic change at the benefit of one business.
- People head down Tongariro Street as that was the direction of the lake, perhaps changing the direction of the traffic would cause less congestion.
- The health and safety of pedestrians being hit by a car in the area was a concern so elected members thought some speed bumps or other speed control installed would be beneficial.
- If businesses want to have tables on the lake side of Roberts Street, then barriers should be a requirement.
- Exploring the turning left from Roberts Street would be beneficial.

Overall elected members felt spending should be kept to a minimum however there were some safety issues that needed to be addressed.

The workshop closed at 11.55am.