

THAMES COROMANDEL DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTH MERCURY BAY AREA

DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY

- **STRATEGY PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

The purpose of this parking strategy is to provide an outline of the way in which the council and community will respond to the on-going congestion and parking issues associated with tourism and growth in the South Mercury Bay area. This strategy has been developed to alleviate current congestion issues and deal with the demands future growth. It is accompanied by a high level action plan in Attachment B, which details the nature of the works planned for each individual area/service.

What is the Mercury Bay South Area?

The Mercury Bay South Area is bordered to the south by the Whitianga Estuary, the Waiwawa River and the southern boundary of the Mercury Bay Ward of the Thames Coromandel District Council. A map showing the area is attached.

Why do we need a Parking Strategy?

- At present and for the foreseeable future parking demand outweighs supply in the Mercury Bay South area, particularly during peak times, causing congestion issues;
- There has been significant growth in tourists and visitor numbers and this trend is expected to continue;
- There has been growth in Whitianga residential population and nearby communities;
- The introduction of the Coastal Walkway and WW1 Forests projects will provide another tourist attraction to the area;
- To ensure parking demand is managed holistically and effectively by strategic pricing and bylaws to incentivise desired behaviours;
- Recent MWH Report considerations and recommendations suggest an all-encompassing strategy is needed;

What do we have currently and what's in progress?

There are a number of existing carparks as well as a peak summer bus services and a year round Ferry service (from Whitianga to ferry Landing), which have evolved as needs have arisen. The key sites and services are outlined below:

- Grange Road Carpark – 1 carpark accommodating 46 spaces – Currently free parking for cars and buses owned and managed by DOC;
- Hot Water Beach Carparks – 4 carparks accommodating a total of 203 spaces as follows:
 - Pye Place pay n display – 56 spaces at \$4/hr or \$25 per day and free for local residents living within the area bordered by Boat Harbour Road, SH25, Hot Water Beach Road, Link Road and the Roby property.
 - Taiwawe / Bull Paddock – 65 spaces – \$2.00 per hour or \$15.00 per day and free for local residents living within the area bordered by Boat Harbour Road, SH25, Hot Water Beach Road, Link Road and the Roby property.
 - Surfers Carpark – 57 spaces – Free
 - Overflow Parking - 25 spaces – Free
- Hahei Village Entrance Road Reserve unformed temporary car park- 129 spaces – Free
- Ferry Landing - 28 spaces plus 20 on the road - Free
- Cemetery near Ferry Landing – 60 spaces – Free
- Stella Evered – 20 spaces - Free
- Year round ferry service from Ferry Landing to Whitianga (\$6.00 return);
- Limited commercial shuttle service from Ferry Landing to Hot Water Beach via Cooks Beach and Hahei run during the peak summer period from 28th December to end of Easter break.
- Park and ride bus service from Hahei Village Entrance Road Reserve car park to Grange Road car park from 28th December to end of January.

To compliment / enhance the existing car parks Council also has the following initiatives / developments in progress:

- Village Entrance Carpark – in progress due for completion November 2016 – Currently 129 informal parks (Will be 194 spaces when completed);
- Lee's Road Carpark due to commence construction by January 2017 (Stage 1 will be 150-160 spaces, and Stage 2 will be a further 350 spaces in the future when needed);
- Expressions of Interest (EOI) for methods of crossing the Purangi Estuary between

Hahei and Cooks Beach.

- Evaluation of the feasibility of establishing a car park at the old Purangi Landfill site
- Consideration of Purangi Reserve as an area for longer-term parking if/when needed

- **STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES**

There are a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties which include but are not limited to:

- Thames Coromandel District Council
- Department of Conservation
- Ngati Hei
- Mercury Bay Community Board
- Community Ratepayer and Resident Groups
- Mercury Bay Business Association
- Hahei Business Association
- Owners / Residents of Coastal Properties
- Users of the Coastal Environment including Tourists
- Wider Mercury Bay Property Owners & Residents
- Local Support / Volunteer Groups
- Waikato Regional Council
- NZTA
- Coastal Environment Groups e.g. Forest & Bird Protection Society
- Key Stakeholders Groups including transport operators, ferry operator, commercial business operators
- Walks Governance Board
- Walks Project Board

The Area Office and Project Board in consultation with relevant stakeholders will play a key part in implementing this Parking Strategy and Action Plan and influencing its direction and priorities as it is delivered.

It is also important to acknowledge that the Walks project has established a three-way partnership between the key partners of TCDC, Ngati Hei and DOC. Each of these parties have provided input into this strategy and will continue to do so throughout the process of strategy development. Once the strategy has been agreed and approved TCDC will progress the agreed Action Plan, including seeking any necessary consents and property rights required.

- **CURRENT ENVIRONMENT**

The following is a brief summary of the views and aspirations expressed by a number of

stakeholders / interest groups. In some cases different groups have expressed opposing views.

- Arrangements made for traffic movement and parking need to dissuade people from taking vehicles into Hahei Village and parking on the streets and get them to park at the Village Entrance or other car parks.
 - The Hahei Village Entrance Car Park should be free of charge so that visitors do not enter the village and park for free on the streets.
 - Planning needs to commence now to increase car park capacity at Hahei Village entrance based on the growth projections.
 - Kotare Reserve should not be used for overflow parking.
 - Footpaths linkages from the Village entrance car park to the shops and beach need to be improved to encourage people to use them.
 - Creating a pedestrian friendly environment in Hahei needs to be part of future planning.
 - Parking restrictions are not appropriate in Hahei.
 - Grange Road car park should be drop of only at least over the peak period.
 - The park and ride service from Hahei Village car park to Grange Road and a shuttle bus service from other car parks are essential.
 - Tour buses should park in the car parks and not on street in the villages.
 - A charge could be made for the use of public toilets.
 - Lees Road should be upgraded for its entire length (widened where necessary and sealed).
 - Parking should be restricted to residents only on Hahei Village streets.
 - Signage at the intersection of Link Road and Hahei Road should direct people to the businesses in Hahei including those offering alternative water based methods of accessing Cathedral Cove.
 - Need to ensure sat nav providers have up to date and accurate information so that people are directed to the service they are seeking.
 - If Whitianga is to be the hub for visitors accessing south Mercury Bay there is a need to ensure Hahei accommodation providers are not left out when visitors are seeking places to stay.
 - There should be no businesses operating at the Lees Road car park but instead information directing people to Hahei to use the services of the businesses there.
 - Lees Road car park should be free so that visitors do not park in Lees Road or overcrowd the Stella Everard car park.
 - Further discussion is needed regarding if or when parking needs to be formalised at the Purangi estuary.
 - There are significant environmental issues with a crossing at the Purangi mouth, which would create a physical barrier. Some form of water based crossing may be more sustainable but long term a walk around the estuary would be more acceptable.
- **PARKING STRATEGY GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The following shall be the guiding principles for the management of parking in South

Mercury Bay:

- Improve, extend and promote the use of public transport including buses, shuttles and park and ride services as a means to reduce parking demand. Encourage private enterprise provision of these services where appropriate;
- Ensure there is a pricing differential for shuttle use vs carpark use. i.e. discounted shuttle use if they show their carpark ticket;
- Encourage visitors to use Whitianga as a base and to use public transport in the form of the ferry and buses to access all attractions in the South Mercury Bay area;
- Encourage commercial operators to use the established carparks rather than beach front areas;
- Provide a bus service to all locations in South Mercury Bay, including Cooks Beach, Purangi Estuary, Lees Road, Hahei, Hot Water Beach;
- Ensure public transport facilities, locations and timetables are well-advertised via web and GPS applications where cost-effective;
- Establish a pricing hierarchy with differential charges that encourage tourists and visitors to use public transport services;
- Where visitors chose to drive to South Mercury Bay ensure the car park facilities encourage the use of the car parks as a base from which to use public transport to visit other locations;
- Develop a staged approach to implementing carparks and associated bylaws to ultimately eliminate car parking on beachfronts and in culturally sensitive areas;
- Protect and enhance local commercial activities as opportunities arise;
- Ensure marketing and signage is appropriately designed and placed to promote the desired behaviours;
- To encourage maximum use of available parking spaces in each car park develop a demand-based pricing strategy – Seasonal (peak summer, shoulder seasons and off peak winter) Daily peaks (e.g. 10am-4pm, low tide at HWB); and implement time limited parking at sites where capacity issues are present. (e.g. maximum 4 hours);
- Implement user pays for sealed and established carparks, with free use for locals where it is not detrimental to the main purpose of the car park;
- Ensure that car parks are linked to services and facilities by well formed pathways;
- Where feasible provide additional free or low cost temporary/overflow carparks in

peak times;

- Where a charge is made for a car park use the pay and display method or controlled entry and exit;
- Restrict or prohibit parking and/or establish parking time limits in streets where off street car parks have been established to encourage use of established car parks;
- Ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of Bylaws;
- If enforcement requirements warrant it, establish a full time local enforcement officer role;
- Monitor traffic volumes and congestion “hot spots” to report and review the strategy and action plan at least annually or as needed.

- **IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND TIMING**

The Parking Strategy is supported by the attached High Level Action Plan. These will need to be implemented at the same time as a staged process and as soon as practical once approved by Council.

The following key steps shall form the basis for the implementation and management of the Mercury Bay Parking Strategy:

- Further consultation with affected parties and key stakeholders and agreement of guiding principles and high level strategy from the following parties:
 - Project Team / Area office - early July 2016 - COMPLETED
 - TCDC Legal– early July 2016 - COMPLETED
 - Project Board – mid July - COMPLETED
 - Mayor's feedback - mid July COMPLETED
 - Key Stakeholders Working Group – 26 August 2016 (rescheduled from 10 August 2016)
 - Lee’s Road Residents – August / September 2016
 - Mercury Bay Community Board 24 August 2016
 - Governance Board – September 2016

- Develop communications and consultation plan – August / September 2016
- Proceed with wider stakeholder and interested party consultation – September 2016
- Consider feedback from wider stakeholder groups and interested parties – September 2016
- Develop a signage plan for each site / area to inform the desired behaviours – September 2016
- Seek final sign off on strategy from Project Board and Councillors – October 2016
- Implement Communications Plan including the development of appropriate signage and supporting infrastructure – November 2016 onwards
- Further development and implementation of the High Level Action Plan – November 2016 onwards
- Monitoring of the Strategy and adaptation where required. - ongoing