

Huntly Community Board update – August 2018

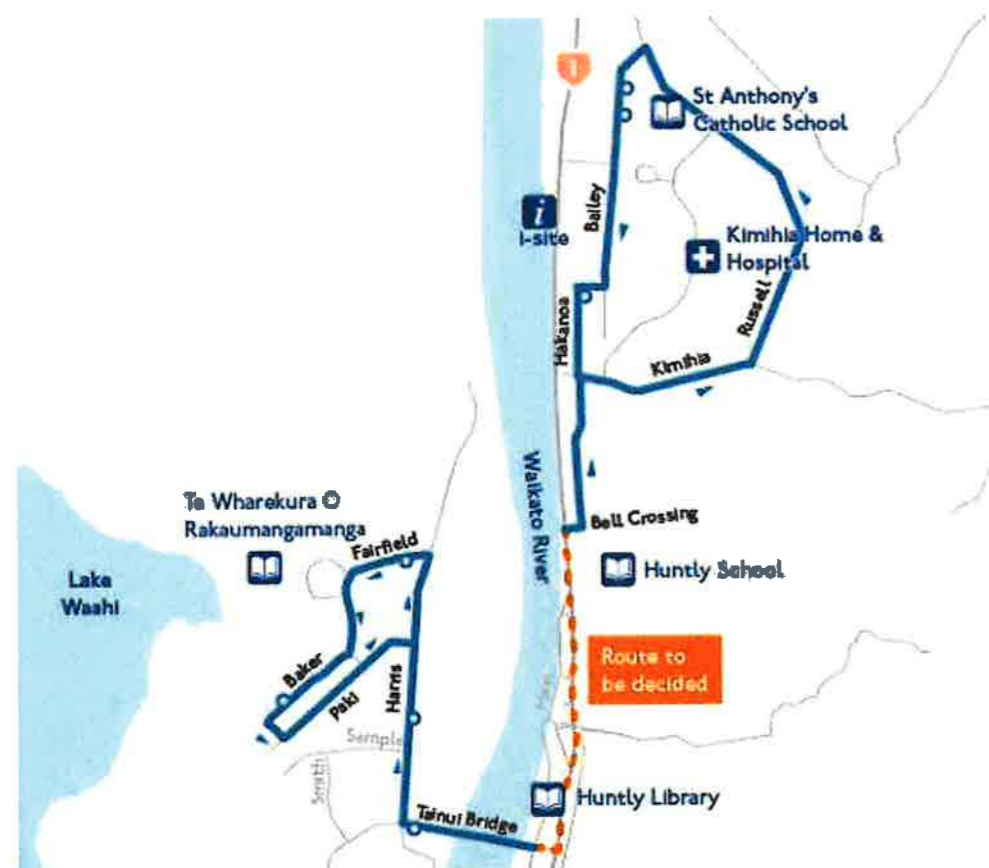
Northern Connector bus service update

The last 12 months have seen more than a quarter of a million passengers use the Northern Connector buses. More and more people are using this service, with 233,000 passengers starting their journey in Huntly, Taupiri or Ngāruāwahia each year.

Waikato Regional Council (WRC) are aware that currently buses on this route can be very busy, particularly on the early morning services into Hamilton, and have been developing options to improve bus services, and increase passenger numbers to/from Huntly.

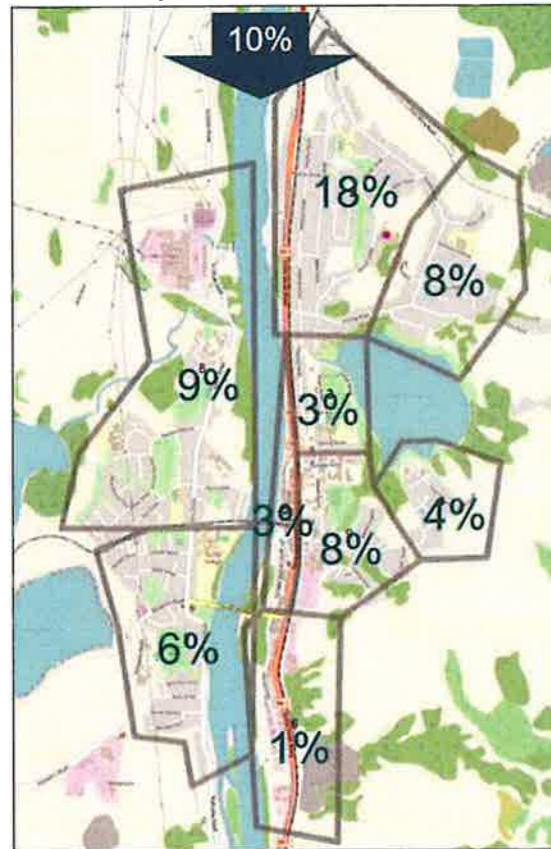
In May of this year we surveyed Northern Connector passengers to find out the best solution for changes to this route with a proposal to for services to start alternating between Huntly East and Huntly West throughout the day. Our consultation closed on Friday 18 May with a fantastic 196 responses.

We suggested a proposed route to serve the West and East of Huntly alternately.



There was overwhelming support for the proposal to serve the East and West of Huntly with some very positive comments on the proposed routes. Respondents were also asked to identify where they were travelling from to board the bus and we found that this correlated very well with our proposed route.

Residence of passengers boarding the bus on Main Street



The other main messages to come out of the survey responses were:

- Strong support for a service to extend to Te Kauwhata.
- Support for additional capacity, particularly in the morning.
- Some tension in relation to the number of school children on our main buses.
- Some concerns about taking our main buses out of Main Street (due to the double decker).
- Some concerns over service reliability and the timetable.

We are taking this feedback forward, and **over the next few weeks** we will be making the following changes to our Northern Connector services:

- We will be extending the service to Te Kauwhata, twice per day in the morning and afternoon peaks.
- In order to provide much needed additional capacity on the Route we will be deploying the double decker vehicle with 87 seats on the 0700 service into Hamilton and the 1535 Hamilton to Huntly weekday services. The bus will be air conditioned, fully accessible for wheelchairs, walkers and prams, and have free Wi-Fi on board.
- The height of the bus means that the main bus stop in town cannot be served due to the low rail bridge on Main Street, and so this bus will depart from new stops on William Street. Waikato District Council has the responsibility for the installation of bus stops and has been undertaking the process necessary for their installation.
- Details of the stop locations will be provided to passengers shortly.

- We will be amending our timetables for the route, taking account of passenger feedback and the journey time information that we have been collecting.



In the longer term we have some further changes planned to improve our services. These changes are dependent on some on other changes to our network in Hamilton, and so will take longer to implement.

- It is proposed that the double decker vehicle will become our dedicated school assist bus for both Horotiu and Huntly.
- This will release a bus for us to be able to provide additional peak hour services from Huntly to Hamilton which will relieve congestion.
- These buses will all depart from Main Street with a regular timetable and we will begin to service the East and West of Hamilton alternately as per our consultation. This will provide much better accessibility to all passengers in Huntly.

7.00am Huntly West to Hamilton



3.35pm route from Hamilton to Huntly.



Huntly-Ngaruawahia - P2

