

Report to Onewhero-Tuakau Community Board - August 2019

Since the last OTCB meeting in June:

Attended transport briefing for OTCB with Ernest & Vishal.

The meeting was attended by several other members of the OTCB as well. Ernest indicated that there was a good working relationship between the Waikato Council and the Ministry of Transport. Ernest inspired confidence that there would be improvements in public transport for the North Waikato area as there seemed to be a good understanding that good public transport is part of the change that needs to occur.

Train trip between Wellington and Palmerston North

Shortly after the transport briefing with Ernest I was fortunate to use the commuter train service between Wellington and Palmerston North. This service is a 2 hour train journey with one train in the morning from Palmerston North leaving at 6.30am and then returning from Wellington at 5.15pm in the evening. I was on the train from Wellington in the evening and was amazed at how well used it was. It was a long train and yet I had to walk through 2 carriages before I could find a seat. Many of the seats face each other with a table between. This allows people to work on lap-tops during the 2 hour journey. The train has limited stops until it reaches the outskirts of central Wellington and then it stops at each station on the route, eventually arriving at Palmerston North where there were plenty of taxis waiting for passengers. The train also has a café on it so beverages, beer, wine and food are available. Since completing the trip I have been told that some people include the train trip within their working day not in addition to – which means that they are able to get quite a lot of work completed.

Previously I have heard comment that people would not do a 2 hour trip on a train from Hamilton to Auckland. The Wellington to Palmerston North train has shown me that people will use the train for this sort of trip if the service is designed well.

Tuakau Swimming pool

I've had a very good discussion with the manager of Balgravia – the contractors that manage the Tuakau and Pukekohe pools, about the possibility of making the Tuakau pool free for children. The managers view was making the pool free may not meet our intended objective to increase usage as we would still be competing to Pukekohe pool and the free entry does not improve the amenity value. Her feeling was that money could be better spent on improving the facility by doing things such as closing the pool in and heating the water and improving the amenity value.

Caroline Conroy