



Jon Turner

Puketāpapa Local Board

2019/2020 Board Member Report

It has now been a full calendar year (and a bit!) since I was elected to the Puketāpapa Local Board, and it is almost a cliché now to say that it has been a year no one expected. I have put together my 'year in review' as a summary of what I, and the rest of the local board, have been up to.

It would be remiss not to mention the effect of Covid-19 on the past year, so I will get it out of the way first. At the beginning of the year we were halfway through the work program set out by the previous board and working on "our" first work program. This had lots of exciting initiatives, with a start looking to be made on a number of long-awaited projects. With the much-needed belt-tightening, many of these projects have been deferred to future years. We will be waiting a while yet to extend the boardwalk along to Taylor's Bay.

However, we have managed to get quite a lot done this year, and what follows are some of my personal highlights of the year.



The biggest piece of work we have finalized this year has been the Local Board Plan. This is a strategic three year document that we will use to guide us in our decision making roles, as well as being a reference point for the wider council group and the community. We consulted with the community extensively, and this was often a very interesting experience. We went and visited schools, cultural groups, events, businesses, as well as running an online consultation. I found it heartening to see the high percentage of youth engagement in the process, and especially the focus that came through on protecting our environment. Throughout the plan, we have a focus on Māori aspirations, and these are intertwined with the 6 outcomes we see as a focus. Our plan has an emphasis on a strong

community, well-looked after environment, future-focused infrastructure, and a strong local economy. I was pleased to have the inclusion of Volunteering as a focus in the plan, as I am a firm believer in the power of volunteering to build a community. We finalized the document in November and it is available to read on the board's website.



I was extremely proud to be appointed to the Manukau Harbour Forum as our board rep, and doubly so when I was elected by the members of the forum to represent the forum as Chair. The forum is made up of the 9 local boards that surround the Harbour and provides an advocacy role for the harbour within Council, as well as running a number of initiatives externally. My first task as chair was to speak to the Environment and Climate Change committee about a report discussing the Manukau Harbour, and the steps that Auckland Council are taking towards cleaning up and protecting the Harbour for future generations. Puketāpapa has excellent beaches that sit on the harbour, and the water quality is usually excellent for swimming. However, the harbour has been degraded immensely over the past

century. It is our hope that by working with Mana Whenua, Auckland Council and Central Government, we can remediate some of that degradation.

One of the highlights of being on the Local Board is the sheer range of community events we are invited to be a part of. The diversity in our area means there are many new experiences to be had – from being the ‘guest of honor’ at a Chinese Christmas celebration, to planting trees beside Te Auaunga, dancing at India independence celebrations, watching football at Keith Hay Park, eating fantastic food by the Wise Collective... I could fill a page with the activities I have attended in my role. Covid-19 put a pause to these events, but as we returned to ‘normality’, so did my calendar. I was pleased to see the adaptability of Council’s events team, with events such as Diwali and Matariki being spread around Auckland with smaller, community focused events. The feedback from these has been really good and I think we can learn from the challenges we faced. I found the ANZAC day ‘Stand at Dawn’ commemoration quite moving, and it was great to see people out by their letterboxes, as we stood apart but together.



One difficulty that Council seems to face is getting information out to the community well. Over the past year I have written a number of blogs to help with understanding of the issues we face as a local board, which can be read on my website www.jonturner.nz. I also worked with Bobby Shen to put out an informative video on the Local Board Plan, which was received very well. We are looking at producing more of these throughout the year to

highlight the great facilities we have in Puketāpapa, as well as to bring attention to opportunities for community involvement.

My role alongside Julie Fairey as the transport contacts has provided a lot of work, and also a lot of frustration. Puketāpapa suffers a number of issues in the transport realm, both from long term underfunding and also short-sighted decision making. Our role is to serve as intermediary between constituents and Auckland Transport, and we have had a number of issues throughout the year, with our 'issues' spreadsheet running to 53 items at last count. There have been some small wins – seeing the completion of the Frost Rd safety routes, getting a commitment to install broken yellow lines on Hillsborough Road, having a few trouble areas added to AT's safety improvements program – but it has been a struggle getting the larger, long-term issues looked at. This largely comes down to funding, and the small amount of say we have on how money is spent on transport. The two funds we have a say over – the Local Board Transport Capital Fund and Community Safety Fund – were slashed, which meant projects long-planned were put on hold, such as the Hillsborough Road pedestrian crossings by Goodall Street and Waikōwhai Primary, the "Greenway route" from Britton Ave, and a number of other 'small projects.' This has meant the list we put together earlier in the year of important jobs – such as bus stops on Richardson Road and a pedestrian crossing on Beagle Ave – has been stored away. Seeing these projects disappear, while works that we hadn't been notified about, such as the Lynfield bus layover, take place, has been difficult to say the least. The next year will require a renewed focus in the transport realm from us, as we meet our new AT liaison and establish that relationship again.



It has been really great seeing the uptake in people using our active transport network over the past year. Global Hope missions put on the "Amazing Race" which utilized nearly all of our cycleways, and locals were amazed to realise how far they

could go without riding on the road. Hopefully we can extend this network in the future so people feel safe riding to school, work and recreation. Thanks also to the Puketāpapa Active Transport Haven who have created maps and installed them around the area to help improve awareness.



The Puketāpapa Youth Foundation, formerly known as the Puketāpapa Youth Board, have done great things this year. They put on an excellent Youth Summit, with students from local high schools coming together to discuss ideas for improving Puketāpapa and wider Tāmaki Makaurau, as well as feed forward into our local board plan. They put on an excellent

youth award ceremony, and I had the pleasure of selecting the winners of the awards. They have also been extremely helpful throughout the year at events, as well as running a number of great activities for youth and the wider community – such as the street cleanup along Mt Albert Road. I look forward to seeing what they achieve in the future.

It has been exciting and slightly mindboggling to see the changes in our community due to Kāinga Ora's redevelopment of their housing portfolio. It is great to see modern, warm housing being provided and the great design of the homes adds amenity to our area. I have several concerns about the lack of amenity in some developments but having seen plans for the wider area I believe our area will become a great example of well-built density in the future. Our role is as advocates for the community, to fight for better parks and transport outcomes, and I encourage members of the community to reach out with their concerns so we can pass these on.



One flow-on effect from the intensification that Auckland has gone over has been the need for massive infrastructure investment, and with that comes the headache of roadworks. We have seen a number of main routes closed to through traffic at times throughout the year, and this will continue. The work that is being done is vital to keeping Auckland 'flowing' – with the Central Interceptor a massive project that is going to be very visible in

our parks over the next few years. We have good communication with the team running this project, and I have managed to get fixes for a number of issues already.

There have been some great community groups I have been involved with over the last year. Friends of Wairaki Stream managed to have a great second year, despite losing a

planting season and a number of community volunteer days. Seaweed down in Lynfield Cove was a great success, and throughout the year over 700 trees were planted alongside the stream in Lynfield Reserve.



The buy in from the local community has been great, with lots of volunteers turning up to put their hand to

improving the local environment. There are some exciting plans for 2021, with trapping projects, plantings and of course more weeding on the cards.

It has also been very rewarding being a part of the Owairaka parkrun, which started in November of this year. Set up by Julie Collard, this sees people walking and running alongside Te Auaunga through our beautiful parks for a 5km race. It has been great seeing more and more locals join us every Saturday. A great way to keep fit and meet new people.

A focus for me has long been the Waikōwhai Coast, with its numerous parks, beaches and



walkways. It has been great to see the walkways well-kept this year – I reported a fallen tree and received a phone call at 8pm the same night from the arborist who went out looking for it! They had it fixed within days, a great result. We are still waiting on the final design for the Waikōwhai landfill remediation, and continue to face issues

with dumping and fires being lit on the beaches. Even with these difficulties, I think it is hard to find a better track anywhere in Central Auckland, and whenever I take guests on a walk they always leave enchanted.

We are really well supported by our Local Board staff, who work tirelessly to provide us the guidance and information that we need to Govern well. I have been impressed with how good the Puketāpapa area has been looking over the last 3 months, with pathways well kept, signs being replaced and parks looking great. There is always room to improve, and I encourage people to use Auckland Council's 'report a problem' tool when they see rubbish dumping, graffiti, fallen trees or any other problems. It is heartening to see these get fixed up very quickly. I am always happy to help keep an eye on any problems you report and can chase up the 'right people' if need be!



Over the next year I look forward to putting together our Work Program. Although we will still have a reduced budget for capital expenditure, I am hopeful we will be able to get progress on projects that will improve our community. I would love to see drinking fountains in Monte Cecilia and Waikōwhai Park, signage through Walmsley/Underwood parks and along Te Auaunga, more public tree plantings, better footpaths and to finalise the concept plans for Hillsborough Cemetery, Margaret Griffin and Keith Hay Park. I would also like to see a strengthened relationship with Mana Whenua who have a long relationship with the Puketāpapa area.

Thank you once again to the people of Puketāpapa for electing us as your Local Board members in 2019. We have a great team, with Chair Fairey running a very tight ship and it is a privilege to serve our area. Please feel free to contact me any time, via email at jon.turner@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or give me a call on 0211903734.

