

Tahunanui Business Association - Nelson Mail Opinion piece

In 2004 Nelson City Council commissioned the Tahunanui Structure Plan. Its remit was to lay the blueprint for the future prosperity and security of an integrated, family focused sea side community.

“To promote a village heart for Tahunanui that is compact, walkable, diverse, accessibleto improve access to and enhance the area through a network of well connected links and spaces” footnote 1

Since then, freight haulage to and from Port Nelson has grown enormously, making a major contribution to the region’s economy as a whole. What has been overlooked is that Tahunanui is shouldering the impact of this freight load. The Tahunanui community and business association are just saying to the Nelson/Tasman region “please do not let this continue, but take the opportunity now to build another route so that the load can be shared.” If there is no change, The Tahunanui Structure Plan will never be more than just a plan on a piece of paper.

The Nelson Waterfront is often referred to as being a jewel, it is but, we also have our jewel in Tahunanui. We won’t claim it is an “icon” but Conde Nast Travellers guide magazine rated Tahunanui Beach as one of the safest family beaches in the world and this wonderful stretch of sand is just a few minutes from the Nelson CBD.

So let’s work at making the Tahunanui Structure Plan a reality to ensure that Tahunanui Beach Reserve (home to the biggest holiday park in the Southern Hemisphere which hosts over 70,000 people/nights during the summer season) and the many Tahunanui business’s remain for every one to use and enjoy.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if the Tahunanui Community really were to have “public spaces and routes that are active, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all...putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport” foot note 2

In other words, turn Tahunanui into a flourishing, appealing seaside family community that could be enjoyed by all.

We have no interest in fanning the flames of the current debate surrounding the Arterial Traffic Study (ATS). But for Tahunanui the final outcome and implementation of the ATS could be our saviour. Or it could deal a deadly blow to our community.

We do not wish to give long lists of gripes backed up by statistics and make emotive claims. But it is an undeniable fact that if the 3 laning / clearways proposed in Option A of the ATS is recommended and implemented, a great number of motels, restaurants and other commercial operations will have to close or relocate. (the ATS report admits that without any mention of where they would relocate too) They and their customers will not be able to get in or out of the premises while the clearways hours are in force. There is even mention in the ATS that the clearway hours are open ended and may well become permanent. In Tahunanui we already have clearways that don't work, which makes access to our only medical centre, our pharmacy, and the Laboratory extremely risky.

Many in our community, including parents who now drive their kids to school, are greatly concerned about the safety threat and intimidation of heavy freight haulage.

We are not asking for all traffic to be taken off Tahunanui Drive, but on behalf of the Tahunanui businesses and the community as a whole, we say it is high time to build the 3.6 km of new road so that as the regions economy continues to grow the heavy freight loads can be shared with other communities.

While we fully understand the Victory community's concern at having St Vincent Street extended through to Beatsons Road, there is the opportunity when building a new road to include design features to reduce and minimise the effects on that community. This is simply not possible in Tahunanui.

We are not roading or geotechnical engineering experts. But NZTA itself cannot guarantee the security of the Rocks Road stretch of the State Highway 6 network. Surely this poses a serious threat when you listen to engineering experts alerting us to the fact that the security of the network is compromised even further by changing sea and tide patterns; the fragility of the under fill known

as “the slump” along Rocks Road increasingly impacted by logging trucks and other heavy freight vehicles. Who knows how stable Magazine Point is? How would it fare if we were to experience the trauma of a major earthquake such as that which has forever changed the lives of the people of Christchurch?

The reality is the Southern Arterial Route is the only long term sustainable solution to the region’s roading needs, and all communities should accept that heavy traffic is a problem we all should share.

We must stop turning our backs on Tahunanui before the situation gets any worse than it already is. We must ensure that steps are taken now to allow the safety and security of its residents, school children and businesses.

We believe the Southern Arterial Route would restore a better balance between the community and the transport function and would enable Tahunanui to realise its full potential as Nelson’s world famous seaside village community.

Footnotes 1 & 2 “The Tahunanui Structure Plan”

Mike Thomas – chairman Tahunanui Business Association