

7 November 2023

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

REF: OIA-13816

Dear [REDACTED]

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 9 October 2023 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Can you please provide any information you hold relating to the proposed changes to the Riverstone Terraces turn off in Upper Hutt along SH2 (moonshine road)?

Specifically;

- 1. All costs from January 2020 relating to the proposed changes by financial year.*
- 2. The proposed speed limit changes as a result of any upgraded intersection and the justification for these changes.*
- 3. Following (2) why is any speed limit changes for this intersection different to any other along this stretch of road? (ie from Wellington to Upper Hutt so this includes Melling, Kennedy Good, Silverstream).*

I will answer each of your questions in turn.

1. All costs from January 2020 relating to the proposed changes by financial year.

A breakdown of the expenditure for pre-implementation for the State Highway 2 (SH2) Hutt Valley Speed and Infrastructure Improvements Project is provided in the table below. This includes the SH2/Moonshine Hill Road intersection. This value includes expenditure on Feasibility Design of 13 intersections along SH2, detailed design of 4km of median barrier installed between Whakatiki Street and Fergusson Drive, and detailed design of safety improvements at four intersections including the SH2/Moonshine Hill Intersection.

It is not possible to confirm the exact figure for pre-implementation expenditure for the SH2/Moonshine Hill intersection as portions of that expenditure covers work done across all or some of the intersections mentioned above, and are not isolated to the SH2/Moonshine Hill Road intersection alone.

Financial Year	Expenditure (\$)
2020/21	0
2021/22	382,703.55
2022/23	861,395.43
2023/24	80,622.95
Total	1,324,721.93

2. The proposed speed limit changes as a result of any upgraded intersection and the justification for these changes.

The SH2/Moonshine Hill Road intersection upgrade is part of a wider programme of work to improve safety at identified intersections on SH2 in the Hutt Valley. The current SH2/Moonshine Hill Road intersection has been identified as high-risk for death and serious injury and has an unsafe layout not suitable for high-speed and high-volume traffic, including the potential for serious side-impact crashes. There is a recent record of serious and fatal crashes at this intersection.

The new intersection design has been informed by feasibility design work, which included engagement with key stakeholders and the local community to understand safety concerns about the existing layout. Many people expressed concerns about the existing Moonshine Hill Road intersection, and a desire for changes to be made. Further information about the process and programme are available on the project at www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh2-ngauranga-to-featherston/intersection-upgrades, which includes the Ngāūranga to Featherston speed review and safety improvements public engagement report.

The intersection design includes traffic lights (signals), a raised safety platform on the SH2 northbound lane, and a proposed speed limit reduction from 100km/h to 60km/h for approximately 650 metres on the SH2 northbound lane approaching and passing through the intersection from the south. The reduced speed limit is to ensure that drivers can safely stop, when required, or slow down and pass safely through the intersection. For new infrastructure projects such as this one, safe system principles and design standards require us to lower the speed limit when we install traffic lights. The safer speed limit means that if a crash does happen at an intersection (especially a side-on or head-on crash), the impact speed will be lower, giving the people involved a better chance to walk away from the crash without serious injury.

Changing speed limits is a legal process and there are a number of steps Waka Kotahi must follow, as the road controlling authority for state highways. A new rule came into force last year which means we are required to develop speed management plans with a whole-of-network approach, i.e., across New Zealand.

The proposal to reduce speed from 100km/h to 60km/h on this section of SH2 is included in our Interim Speed Management Plan (ISMP). This proposed change, along with proposed speed limit changes around the country, was consulted on in November-December 2022. Subsequent to the consultation, a number of factors have impacted the completion of the plan. The final ISMP is awaiting review and certification by the Director of Land Transport, following which we will confirm which speed limit changes will be implemented. We expect to be able to announce the final decision before the end of the year.

3. Following (2) why is any speed limit changes for this intersection different to any other along this stretch of road? (ie from Wellington to Upper Hutt so this includes Melling, Kennedy Good, Silverstream).

While there are other intersections on SH2 that currently have higher speed limits, current practice for new infrastructure projects at high-risk intersections is that where traffic lights are installed, they are paired with a lower speed. Lower speeds are achieved through both the speed limit and road design changes that encourage people to slow down when approaching the intersection.

We recognise that there will be some inconsistency in the short term. Our long-term plans include safety improvements at other intersections along SH2, which may follow a similar approach to the one we're taking at the Moonshine Hill Road intersection. For each intersection, speed limits will be considered together with design improvements.

This approach can be seen at Whakatiki Street which already has a lower speed limit of 80km/h on the southbound lane through the signals. This was implemented when these signals were added in 2017.

Waka Kotahi is also making changes at several other intersections you've mentioned with the:

- two Melling intersections due to be replaced by a new interchange with an overbridge, on-ramps, and off-ramps. This is part of Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi (RiverLink project).
- intersections at Grounell Crescent, Owen Street, Kennedy Good Drive and Major Drive respectively, due to have a reduced 80km/h speed limit, following consultation carried out in the ISMP and now pending final certification.

The intersections at Silverstream Road Bridge, Gibbons Street, Totara Park, and Fergusson Drive have also been part of our feasibility investigations and the current intention is for these to be progressed in future stages of the SH2 safety improvements.

You can stay across progress on the safety improvement work we're doing on SH2 in the Hutt Valley by visiting the project webpage at www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh2-ngauranga-to-featherston, and sign up to receive updates from the project team.

In line with Waka Kotahi policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact us by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Kinvig', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Mark Kinvig

National Manager Infrastructure Delivery