

6 December 2023

██████████  
████████████████████

REF: OIA-14039

Dear ██████

### **Request made under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your email of 9 November 2023 requesting information regarding work at the intersection of SH3 and Junction Street, New Plymouth, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I have addressed each of your questions below.

*What was supposedly 'wrong' with the intersection?*

During Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's analysis of the safety along this route, we found that there was a high risk of injury at the intersection of SH3 and Junction Road. We also found that proposed changes to this intersection aligned with our safety criteria.

Crash data between 2016 and 2020 for this stretch of SH3 is available on Page 4 of the information sheet published at <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh3-new-plymouth-to-hawera/sh3-new-plymouth-to-egmont-village-information-sheet.pdf>. Since 2020 there have been an additional three crashes, two of which resulted in serious injuries to those involved.

Another matter that prompted the safety improvements work is that the southbound passing lane, which is approximately 420 metres long, is much shorter than the recommended minimum length range of 600 to 800 metres to allow for vehicles to safely overtake each other.

*Why were these changes actioned? Were there any alternatives considered and what was the pros and cons of the various plans?*

Following community feedback, the changes are being made to create a safer intersection where crashes are much less likely to occur and will be less serious if they do occur.

The southbound passing lane at Junction Street will be removed to improve safety. Waka Kotahi also considered preventing right-turns out of Junction Street, but decided against this following community concerns about creating congestion on local roads. The project design was therefore changed to ensure that drivers can still make right turns out of Junction Street.

The work also includes repairing the subsidence of the road pavement which can be observed on the exiting southbound passing lane before the intersection with Junction Street. An intersection speed zone (ISZ) is also being installed to increase safety by detecting when traffic is approaching SH3 from Junction Street, or when turning right into Junction Street from SH3, then temporarily reducing the speed limit on SH3 to 60kmh.

Access to and from SH3 from Junction Street is currently closed until late December 2023 to enable work to be undertaken and fast forward the project's completion by approximately two to three weeks.

*In fitting with the 'Road to Zero' theory has there been any fatalities at this intersection related to the layout?*

Road to Zero focuses on reducing deaths and serious injuries. As noted previously, there were two crashes between 2016 and 2020 at this intersection which resulted in serious injuries. Our records also show that another crash in 2000 resulted in two fatalities.

The Road to Zero strategy is based on the Safe System Approach which considers five elements: safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads and post-crash care. Safety infrastructure helps keep road users safe by reducing the likelihood and severity of a crash.

As most crashes at rural intersections involve turning and crossing vehicles colliding with high-speed traffic continuing through the intersection, we are installing an ISZ at this intersection to reduce the number and severity of crashes. For further information on ISZs and their rationale please see: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/driving-safely/safety-infrastructure/#intersection-speed-zones>.

*What was the public consultation process undertaken?*

Public consultation on the ISZ at Junction Street occurred from 27 February to 2 April 2023 and generated 72 responses. We also undertook a public consultation from November to December 2021 on various safety improvement proposals on SH3 between New Plymouth and Egmont Village.

*How much public money has these alterations wasted?*

Work on a one kilometre stretch of SH3 is estimated to cost \$3.5 million.

Further information on each specific area of the safety improvements project is available at <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh3-new-plymouth-to-hawera-and-sh3a/publications>.

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 at [official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Rob Partridge**

Regional Manager, Infrastructure Delivery (Central North Island)