State Highway 16 Brigham Creek to Waimauku Frequently Asked Questions

The project

What's the problem with this stretch of road?

State Highway 16 (SH16) between Brigham Creek and Waimauku needs to be made safer. In the past 10 years (between 2006 and 2015), four people have lost their lives and 30 have been seriously injured on this stretch of road. This places this stretch of road in the top five percent of high-risk state highways nationally.

Almost half of these crashes were caused by drivers losing control and running off the road or crossing the centreline and hitting an oncoming vehicle.

What are you doing to make it safer?

We're adding safety improvements to SH16.

We're putting in flexible road safety barriers along SH16, except between Taupaki and Kumeu. Between Taupaki and Kumeu we're putting in a safe area in the middle of the road (known as a flush median) to provide more room and a safe place to turn, while keeping traffic flowing.

Between Brigham Creek and Taupaki roundabout we're adding extra lanes, so there will be four lanes (two in each direction). We're building a roundabout at the SH16/Coatesville-Riverhead Highway intersection. Between Huapai and Waimauku we are considering a safer and more appropriate speed, widening the narrow bridges and making it safer to turn and use the intersections at Foster, Station and Factory Roads.

Where we can, we'll put in flexible roadside safety barriers to protect vehicles where there are dangers on the roadside like power poles, trees and deep ditches. We'll also add a sealed road shoulder that will be a minimum of 2m wide for people who cycle. This work is estimated to cost $53 million.

Why are you making these safety improvements?

Too many people are dying or being seriously injured along SH16 and we know that the safety treatments we are putting in are proven to help save lives.

What safety improvements will be used along SH16 between Brigham Creek and Waimauku?

1. Flexible road safety barriers in high-risk areas

- We use flexible road safety barriers down the middle of a road to prevent head-on collisions or along the edge of the road to stop run-off-road crashes.
- Flexible road safety barriers catch vehicles that leave their lane before they hit something less forgiving like other vehicles or trees, poles and deep ditches on the side of the road.
- If you hit a flexible barrier, the steel cables flex, slowing down your vehicle and keeping it upright. They absorb the impact so you, and the people with you, don't. They also prevent you from being deflected to the other side of the road, so you don't 'bounce' off them, potentially into an on-coming vehicle.
- Flexible road safety barriers are a good fit for our roads. They're narrow and work best on long, straight sections and gentle curves. More importantly though, they're the safest barrier if someone does hit them.
- When fitted along the side and centre of the road, they reduce the number of people killed by up to 90 percent.*

2. Flush medians

- Flush medians, which are a safe area in the middle of the road, provide more room and a safe place to wait before you turn, while keeping traffic flowing.
- Separating the traffic this way has been proven to reduce serious crashes by up to 40 percent.*

3. Road shoulder widening

- A wide road shoulder provides space for cyclists, gives drivers more room to recover if they lose control and a safe place to stop in an emergency.
- This can reduce serious crashes by up to 35 percent.*

4. Safer speeds

- Making sure people drive at the right speeds for the road is another way to reduce the risk on our roads.
- At a higher speed, there is less time for you to react to a mistake and recover. And, if you do crash, the risk of being killed or seriously injured is much higher.
- In 2014, speed was a contributing factor in 78 fatal crashes, 357 serious injury crashes and 995 minor injury crashes.

5. Roundabouts

- Roundabouts control the approach and passing speeds at intersections, creating a safer traffic environment

* High Risk Rural Roads Guide, published September 2011, NZ Transport Agency. First Edition.

Which intersections are you making safer?

We are looking at making three intersections safer. We are improving things like lighting, sight lines (how far you can see so you can make a safe decision to turn), left turn lanes and some shoulder widening if this is needed at these intersections:

- Coatesville Riverhead intersection – new roundabout
- Foster Road intersection – right turn bay and turnaround areas
- Matua Road intersection – right turns stopped and sight lines improved for people turning left.

What are you doing between Taupaki and Kumeu where people are parking on the side of the road and making it dangerous?

We want to ensure there is enough room on the shoulder for drivers to be able to safely pull over in an emergency or if they break down. Parking is not encouraged on the state highway, so we are working with the local businesses to find other areas where motorists can park safely.

What is happening at Access, Tapu and Station Roads?

Upgrades at these intersections are being planned as part of the Huapai Triangle Special Housing Area by Auckland Transport and the NZ Transport Agency.

Speed

What are you doing about speed along SH16?

Through our public consultation we heard many of you are concerned about motorists high speeds in the area, especially between Taupaki and Kumeu, and Huapai to Waimauku. We will now look at this issue and if the investigation shows reviewing the speed limit is justified we will engage and consult with the public on this.

Congestion

How will these improvements help with congestion?

This project will help to address some of the existing congestion issues associated with growth by:

- adding extra lanes between Brigham Creek Road and Taupaki
- building a roundabout at the SH16/Coatesville Riverhead highway intersection so traffic can flow better
- putting in a flush median between the Taupaki roundabout and Kumeu so turning traffic can safely wait while allowing traffic to flow.

Why don't you make it four lanes all the way to Kumeu?

The focus of this work is to improve safety in the short term, ahead of other long term projects that will need a lot more time for consenting and planning processes. This project is the first part of a bigger package of work aimed at addressing growth and congestion in Auckland's north-west. More information on the larger Supporting Growth programme can be found at *nzta.govt.nz/supporting-growth*

The Supporting Growth investigations have indicated an alternative route may more effectively address the capacity issues for Kumeu-Huapai than four laning SH16. Both options will be considered as part of the detailed investigations that will start this year, tasked with identifying the preferred option.

When will you build the long-term projects?

Any future projects, such as an alternative route to SH16 and a new public transport network, need significant planning and consenting to be finished before any work can start.

These projects are among those identified through the Supporting Growth programme. It is a 30-year plan for potential improvements that aim to align land use development with investment in all modes of transport services. However, it also notes that in Kumeu and Huapai land use development is expected to increase over the next 10 years or so, and ahead of that, development in the Whenuapai and Redhills areas.

Therefore, planning and consent processes for all the projects in the Supporting Growth programme will be staged and in line with land use development. The next step is for the NZ Transport Agency and Auckland Transport to work together with Auckland Council to confirm projects and undertake consultation with potentially affected property owners, stakeholders and the public. Dates for consultation are yet to be confirmed but will be widely advertised and all project updates will be available at *nzta.govt.nz/supporting-growth*

Construction

How will this work get done?

To get a head start on the construction of the SH16 safety improvements, the work has been split into sections. While all sections are a priority, work will start first on those that will provide the greatest safety benefits – the sections with highest crash history – along with those that are the easiest to construct.

What section are you doing first?

The section between Huapai and Waimauku will be delivered first over a 12-month timeframe from November 2018 to October 2019. The Brigham Creek to Kumeu section will be delivered over a two-year period from February 2019 to February 2021. Please note the construction timeframes may change.

How did you decide on the order of the sections?

To determine the order, we looked at the safety benefits, targeting the highest risk areas, the complexity of the work and constraints, such as whether land needs to be purchased.

Why is it taking so long?

It's important we make the improvements that are right for the road, and that work for the people who use it and live along it, while still keeping traffic moving and minimising delays. This is a complicated stretch of road with increasing numbers of vehicles and other large-scale projects.

Who will be doing the work?

We'll go through a competitive tendering process to find a contractor to build the safety improvements.

Property

How much land do you need to purchase?

We'll plan our improvements so that we avoid the need to buy land where possible, but to help widen the road, we may need some land. We'll have details once our design work is finished.

How will I know if my land is affected?

Someone from our team will contact every landowner whose property may be affected. This includes both landowners whose land might be needed for the project and landowners whose driveway access might be affected during construction.

We'll also send out information to everyone along the road so that people know what's happening and have the chance to talk with our team.

Where can I get more information if my land is affected?

We'll talk to people whose land is affected about the process and their options once we've confirmed whether any of their land is needed. But if you do want to find out more, you can find information on the *Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) website.*

What happens if we have services located in the area of road works? Who will pay for the relocation of this?

You don't need to worry about utilities like water pipes and power cables that the council or power company has put in within the road boundaries. If you have a utility that you've had put in yourself, then we might need to talk to you.

Barriers

Pulling off the road when there is a barrier

Will drivers still be able to pull over?

While we don't encourage people to pull over on a state highway there'll still be gaps in the barrier, especially around driveways, if you do need to pull over completely in an emergency.

Where side barriers are put in this will mean there are some places where you can't pull completely off the road.

Overall, the sealed road shoulder will be wider than it was before so you'll have more space to recover if you make a mistake, or need to pull over in an emergency.

Where can I pull over if there's a barrier on the road?

Cars will usually be able to pull onto the shoulder beside the safety barrier. Road safety barriers may prevent some wide vehicles from pulling off completely so there are regular gaps in the side barriers, usually every 400-500m where possible, as well as at intersections and driveways.

Vehicles wanting to pass slower traffic will need to wait until the slower vehicle can pull over into a gap in the side barrier. While this may require some patience and understanding, it makes the road safer for everyone.

With barriers, the road space is clearly defined so agricultural or large vehicles won't be weaving on and off the shoulder.

Barriers and agricultural vehicles

Will agricultural vehicles still be able to use the road?

The widened road shoulder and the widened centreline will mean there's room for agricultural vehicles. We'll also be leaving some gaps in the barrier, at driveway entrances and intersections, so that people driving large or wide vehicles can use to pull off the road completely.

Do road safety barriers prevent large agricultural vehicles from pulling over?

When wide agricultural vehicles need to make a right-hand turn, they can still pull off to the left side of the road and turn right when it is safe to do so.

How will people pass wide slow-moving agricultural vehicles when side and median barriers are installed?

For most of the route the wide shoulder will provide enough room for most agricultural and large vehicles to pull over.

Barriers and emergency services

How will emergency services get to people in an accident if barriers are installed?

There will be no changes to emergency procedures when side barriers are installed. If there is an accident blocking a lane, and cars are trapped in the lane between the flexible road safety barriers and the accident, the barrier can be released and dropped, in 60m sections, creating a bypass. Wide driveway accesses along the route will allow trucks to move further off the lane and will provide extra space for emergency services to pass. Emergency vehicles can also use the opposite side of the carriageway to pass queued vehicles and access the incident.

Barriers and buses

Where will buses stop once barriers are installed?

There will be gaps left in side barriers at designated bus stops. School buses will also be able to pull over safely at driveways to allow passengers on and off the bus.

Barriers and cyclists

Will cyclists still be able to ride on the road?

We're making this road safer for everyone and this includes people riding bikes. Wherever we put in a side barrier we'll make sure there's space between it and the road for cyclists.

Barriers and motorcyclists

What happens if a motorcyclist hits the barriers?

Motorcyclists don't have the same protection in a crash as the occupants of vehicles, and special consideration needs to be given for how to keep them safe. Roadside and median flexible safety barriers are highly effective in preventing deaths and injuries for all road users including motorcyclists. The Safe System approach to road safety holds that while mistakes are inevitable, deaths and serious injuries are not. The Transport Agency is investing in improved roads and roadsides that are increasingly safer for motorcyclists when they or other road users make mistakes.

Motorcyclists have been opposed to flexible road safety barriers because they think the steel ropes will act like a 'cheese cutter' when hit by a rider. However, studies have shown this assumption is not correct. Motorcyclists are more likely to survive an impact with a flexible road safety barrier than an impact with trees, poles or oncoming vehicles which the barrier will prevent them striking in a crash.

The University of New South Wales has undertaken an in-depth analysis of motorcycle impacts into roadside barriers in both New Zealand and Australia. The data shows that barriers of any kind contributed to a very small percentage of motorcycle fatalities. A study of the NZ motorcycle-barrier crash data from January 2001 to July 2013 shows of 20 motorcycle fatalities sustained as a result of riders hitting a roadside or median barrier, just three involved flexible safety (wire rope) barriers, while 13 involved traditional steel 'W' beam barriers and four other barrier types. Over the same time period there were 97 motorcyclist fatalities from collisions with posts or poles, 70 from hitting traffic signs and 93 from crashing into unprotected trees.

You can read about why we use flexible road safety barriers ***here*** or view our information flyer on them ***here*.**

Walking and cycling

How will it be safer for people who walk or bike?

The safety improvements along this stretch of road include road shoulders that are 2m wide. They are wider than the minimum standard to make it safer for people who walk or bike.
The roundabouts have been designed to provide safe walking and cycling paths to circulate the roundabout, clear of traffic, and have designated safe crossing points through the islands.
The project team is also working with the Supporting Growth Alliance to ensure safety improvements are designed to accommodate any future work that supports walking and cycling.

Where can people cross the road safely?

We understand there is interest in pedestrian crossings at Wintour Road, Soljans bus stop and at the Coatesville Riverhead Highway intersection. These locations will be reviewed as well as other locations to see where the best places are for new crossing points. These are likely to be pedestrian refuge areas - safe places to wait and cross.