



State Highway 20A to Airport

Frequently asked questions

23 August 2017

1. WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL THE LANDING DRIVE ROUNDABOUT UPGRADE IS FINISHED BEFORE OPENING THE VEHICLE UNDERPASS AT KIRKBRIDE ROAD INTERCHANGE AND CLOSING SH20A/MONTGOMERIE ROAD ACCESS?

Local and motorway traffic converging at the Kirkbride Road intersection has resulted in a high number of accidents. The Transport Agency is separating local traffic and motorway vehicles by reinstating all right turns of the Kirkbride Road interchange, and opening the new vehicle underpass which will also help to improve safety and make travel times more reliable.

2. WHAT'S THE REASON FOR REMOVING THE INTERSECTIONS AT KIRKBRIDE ROAD AND MONTGOMERIE ROAD, AND BUILDING AN INTERSECTION TO REPLACE THE LANDING DRIVE ROUNDABOUT?

The Kirkbride Road and Montgomerie Road intersections have safety records that need to be improved. Local and motorway traffic converging at the intersections has resulted in a high number of accidents. The Transport Agency is separating local road traffic and motorway vehicles where possible to improve safety and journey reliability.

SH20A merges into the Auckland Airport road network just before the Landing Drive roundabout which means drivers using the new intersection will be travelling at one consistent speed when they approach the intersection.

The Landing Drive roundabout is almost at capacity. A roundabout works best when there is a similar flow of vehicles on each arm of the roundabout. At Landing Drive, the strong north/south flow means the roundabout is not balanced rather than working as it was designed to do. The solution is a new 8-lane intersection which will improve traffic flow.

3. QUEUES AT LANDING DRIVE ROUNDABOUT ARE WORSE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN. WHAT'S GOING TO BE DONE ABOUT THEM?

We acknowledge that closing the SH20A/Montgomerie Road intersection will result in a longer queue time at the Landing Drive roundabout during peak periods. We will help traffic flows by reinstating the southbound left-hand turn slip lane at the roundabout in October 2017. We have also installed temporary traffic lights at the roundabout. Drivers will then travel non-stop into the city when travelling northbound on SH20a using the Waterview Tunnel.

The upgrade of the Landing Drive roundabout to an 8-lane intersection with traffic lights will be completed by mid-2018.

4. WHEN WILL ALL THE ROADWORKS ON KIRKBRIDE ROAD BE FINISHED?

All work on local roads around the Kirkbride Road interchange will be finished by December 2017.

5. WHAT PROVISION HAVE YOU MADE FOR BUS LANES OR ALTERNATIVE MODES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

We have created room for a bus shoulder lane in each direction. Priority has been given to the southbound bus lane, for passengers travelling to the airport and it will be operating by early 2018. We have also future-proofed the vehicle underpass to allow for the addition of rail.

6. WHY ISN'T THE SOUTHBOUND OFF-RAMP AT THE KIRKBRIDE ROAD INTERCHANGE FULLY OPEN?

Two lanes are open and the third lane will remain closed for our contractors to have a safe work area to continue barrier and kerbing work, which is expected to be finished late-October 2017.

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7. IF THE NEW ROAD LAYOUT AT THE MONTGOMERIE ROAD INTERSECTION WITH SH20A IS NOT WORKING, WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT IT?

We will closely monitor traffic light phasing to help improve traffic flow where possible. Traffic to and from the airport will be given priority during the afternoon peak period. We will widen Ascot Road to 2 right turn lanes eastbound by October, reinstate the southbound left hand slip lane at the Landing Drive roundabout in early October and install a temporary traffic light on Landing Drive in mid-September. While these improvements will help traffic to flow, it may take some time to do so while drivers adjust to the new layout and work out their best route.

8. WHY IS THE TRANSPORT AGENCY CLOSING THE SH20A/MONTGOMERIE ROAD INTERSECTION?

The SH20A/Montgomerie Road intersection needs to close for safety reasons. Heading towards the city (northbound), there is 180m between the Montgomerie Road on-ramp and the new Kirkbride Road interchange off-ramp so vehicles doing 100km/h are effectively travelling 180m in 6 seconds, which gives drivers little time to change lanes safely. The minimum distance required between the on-ramp and off-ramp is 900m.

Drivers wanting to change lanes between the SH20A/Montgomerie Road intersection and Landing Drive (when it is upgraded from a roundabout to an intersection controlled by traffic lights) face a similar situation – too short a distance in which to change lanes safely.

9. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO HELP REDUCE THE CONGESTION THAT IS LIKELY FOLLOWING THE CLOSURE OF THE SH20A/MONTGOMERIE ROAD INTERSECTION?

We have upgraded a number of local intersections and installed temporary lights at the Landing Drive roundabout. Earlier this year, the Transport Agency also made the decision to open the underpass to traffic and reinstate right turns at the Kirkbride Road interchange before closing the SH20A/Montgomerie Road intersection.

When the underpass opens to vehicles, the traffic light phases around the Kirkbride Road interchange will change and traffic crossing Kirkbride Road will get a longer green light. That's because motorway traffic will travel through the Kirkbride Road underpass.

A taskforce was established in December 2016 to find ways to improve travel times and congestion on the roads and state highways around Auckland Airport. Despite a 17 per cent increase in traffic since 2014 on State Highway 20B from the airport terminal to the SH20 on-ramp, the improvements have helped reduce journey times to the same levels as in 2014.

The Transport Agency acknowledges that there will be a settling in period after the layout changes while drivers work out their best route.

10. WHY DOESN'T THE TRANSPORT AGENCY BUILD A SLIP ROAD TO ENABLE TRAFFIC TO JOIN SH20A FROM MONTGOMERIE ROAD?

There is not enough room to build a slip road in the area, the access to it would be uphill and traffic would travel from a 50km/h zone to 100km/h. Merging into motorway traffic without the assistance of traffic lights at Montgomerie Road would be a hazard and create congestion on the motorway.

11. CAN'T YOU WAIT UNTIL THE LANDING DRIVE ROUNDABOUT UPGRADE IS FINISHED BEFORE OPENING THE VEHICLE UNDERPASS AT THE KIRKBRIDE ROAD INTERCHANGE AND CLOSING SH20A/MONTGOMERIE ROAD?

Reinstating all right turns at the Kirkbride Road interchange and opening the vehicle underpass to traffic will help to improve safety and ensure consistent travel times at an intersection with unfavourable safety statistics. The benefits of opening the underpass outweigh the effect of closing the SH20A/Montgomerie Road intersection.

12. WHAT IS THE HEIGHT RESTRICTION FOR THE VEHICLE UNDERPASS AT KIRKBRIDE ROAD INTERCHANGE?

5.1 metres

13. WHAT IS THE SPEED LIMIT IN THE VEHICLE UNDERPASS?

80km/h. The speed limit in the underpass will increase to 100km/h when the Landing Drive Roundabout upgrade is finished in mid-2018.

14. THE VEHICLE UNDERPASS IS MUCH WIDER THAN THE TWO LANES IN EACH DIRECTION. WHY IS THIS?

It has been built to allow for future development that may include light or rapid rail.

15. WHAT IS THE ARTWORK AT EACH END OF THE VEHICLE UNDERPASS AND WHY IS IT LIT IN BLUE?

The artwork panels were designed by local iwi artists and are part of the 'gateway' experience to welcome people to Auckland. The artwork is symbolic of the emergence from dark to light and the attainment of knowledge. Placing it above at each end of the vehicle underpass provides an entrance and exit that imitates a pare (door lintel) to a traditional Maori whare tupuna (ancestral house). The panels can be lit in any colour except red (stop/warning/danger/incident).

16. WHAT IS THE ARTWORK ON THE SIDES OF THE KIRKBRIDE ROAD BRIDGE?

Safety screens on each side of the bridge contribute to the 'gateway' arrival experience, welcoming people to Auckland. The undulating series of curving posts wrapped in wire mesh represent waves and waka, and waka sails, reflecting the importance of the sea to local iwi.