



SH73 WEST MELTON IMPROVEMENTS

Engagement summary

WAKA KOTAHI NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 2021

1. BACKGROUND

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is proposing to install traffic signals at the intersection of State Highway 73 and Weedons Ross Road. The close proximity of the current West Melton Road intersection prevents efficient operation of the signals, and it is proposed to redirect West Melton Road to connect with Weedons Ross Road at the intersection with Kingsdowne Drive.

People in the community have told us they would like to feel safer when walking and cycling around the village, and that drivers using the SH73 Weedons Ross Road intersection are worried about accidents and often feel frustrated because of lengthy delays at busy times.

On 7 October 2020 we held a workshop with key stakeholders and considered issues and options. Following this, more investigation was carried out and a concept design chosen to take to the wider community.

The proposed changes in the draft design include:

- Traffic lights at the intersection of State Highway 73 and Weedons Ross Road, which will help make travel times more reliable and give cyclists and pedestrians a safe place to cross.
- New paths and pedestrian facilities to connect key parts of the community.
- A new link road connecting West Melton Road with Weedons Ross Road clear of the SH73 intersection.
- A new roundabout at the intersection of the new link road, Weedons Ross Road and Kingsdowne Drive.

The changes we are looking to make will help reconnect the community to key facilities, such as the community and recreation centre, the Domain, local shops, West Melton School and early childcare facilities.

They will also help reduce delays and make travel times at the intersection more reliable – which is really important as the Selwyn District is growing and more people are using Weedons Ross Road to access the newly opened Christchurch Southern Motorway.

NZ Upgrade Programme

This project is part of the NZ Upgrade Programme (NZUP) which is investing \$6.8 billion to save lives, get our cities moving and boost productivity in the country's growth areas.

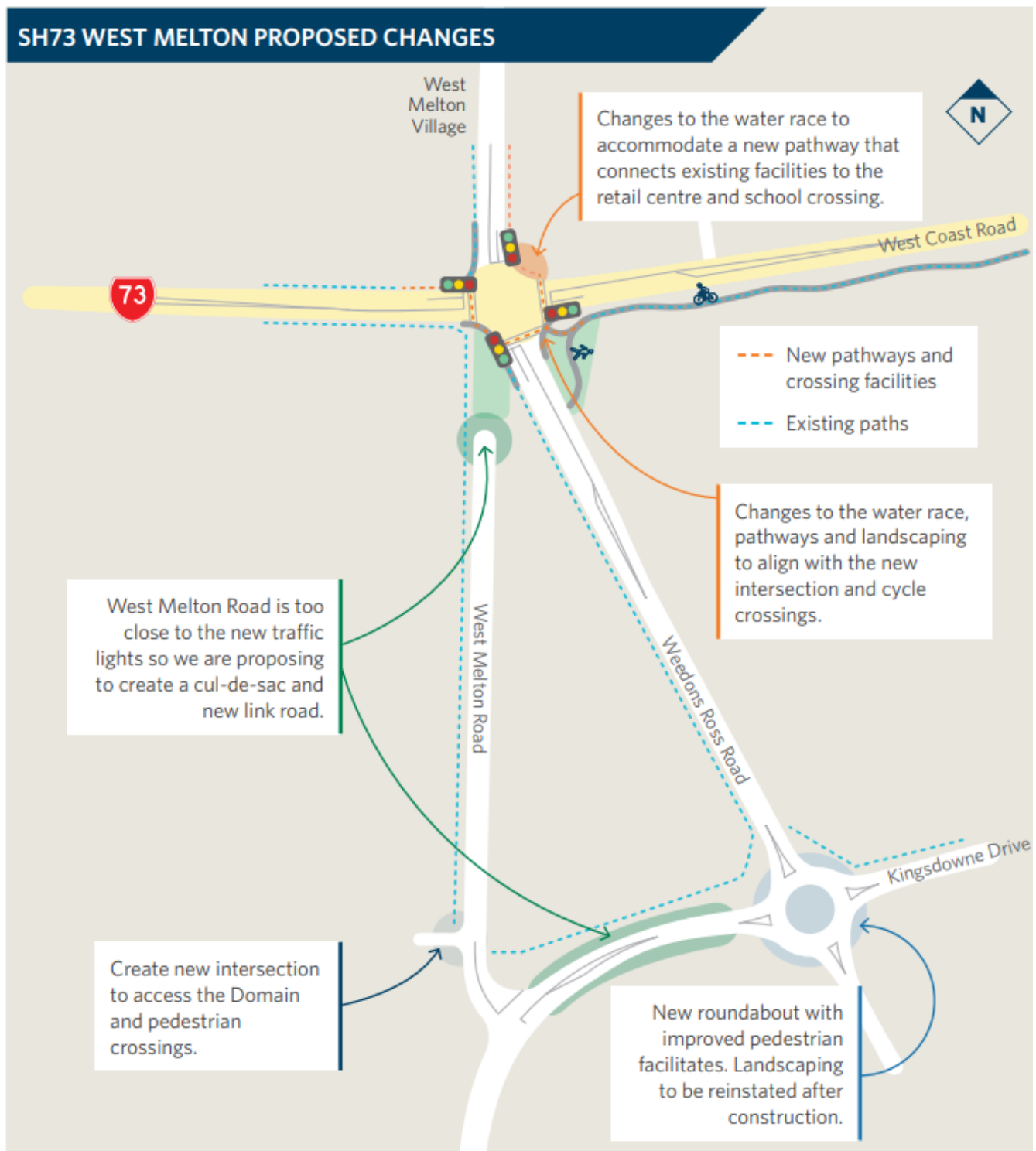
The programme will play a vital role in helping to stimulate the economy and support the country as it recovers from the impacts of COVID 19.

NZUP provides a pipeline of work for the construction industry for the next decade – 800 to 1000 direct jobs as the first five projects get underway in the next 12 months, and 7000 to 9000 indirect opportunities for our wider supply chain.

It supports a shift to greater transport choice – with a balanced investment in public transport, roads and walking and cycling. New transport corridors are being built that unlock new housing developments, support economic growth and improve safety and accessibility.

Find out more at: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/planning-and-investment/nz-upgrade/>

2. MAP OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES



A map showing the proposed changes.

3. ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

People were able to give feedback on the proposed design via Social Pinpoint, an online engagement tool, and at a drop-in session at West Melton School on 26 November 2020. Email was also a feedback option.

A range of tools and channels were used to advertise the project and how people could give feedback on the proposed plan.

Newsletters were dropped to businesses and homes in West Melton and a print advertisement ran in the Selwyn Times the week of the event. A social media post on the Waka Kotahi Facebook page went live before the event, and posts were also shared on stakeholder channels, including Selwyn District Council, West Melton School and the West Melton Community Facebook page. The local school also shared information in their digital weekly newsletter.

A reminder on the Waka Kotahi Facebook page was posted before feedback closed.

Maps of the proposed changes were available at the community drop-in event. Attendees were invited to place post-it note comments and suggestions directly onto the maps. Feedback from these maps has been included in the overall feedback themes.

Information sheets about the project were available and members of the project team held one-on-one conversations with local residents.

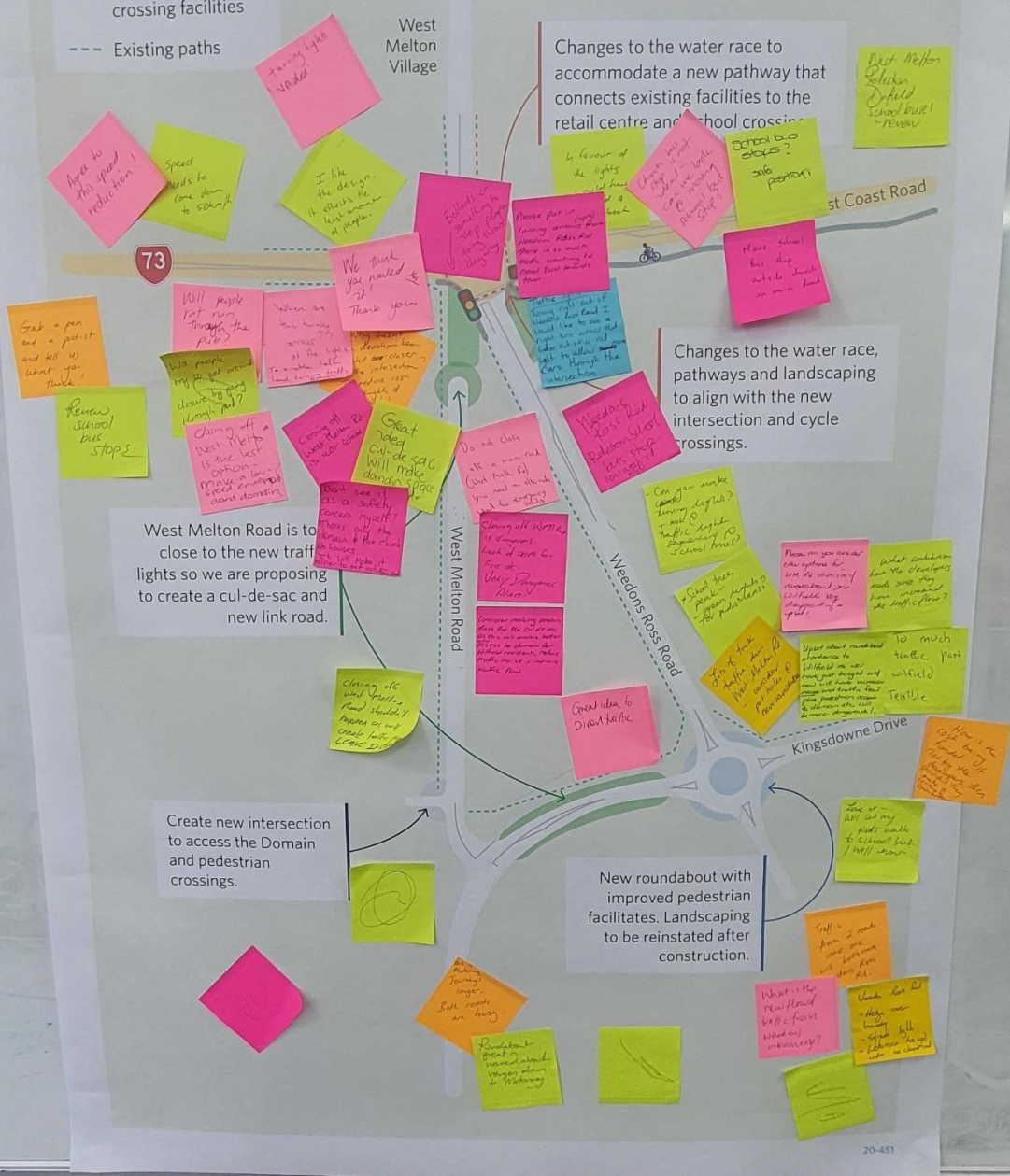
3. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

There were 73 comments in total on Social Pinpoint and approximately 70 people attended the drop-in event, with 47 post-it notes/feedback collected. Some people ticked comments they agreed with, rather than adding another post-it note. A number of emails containing feedback were also received.

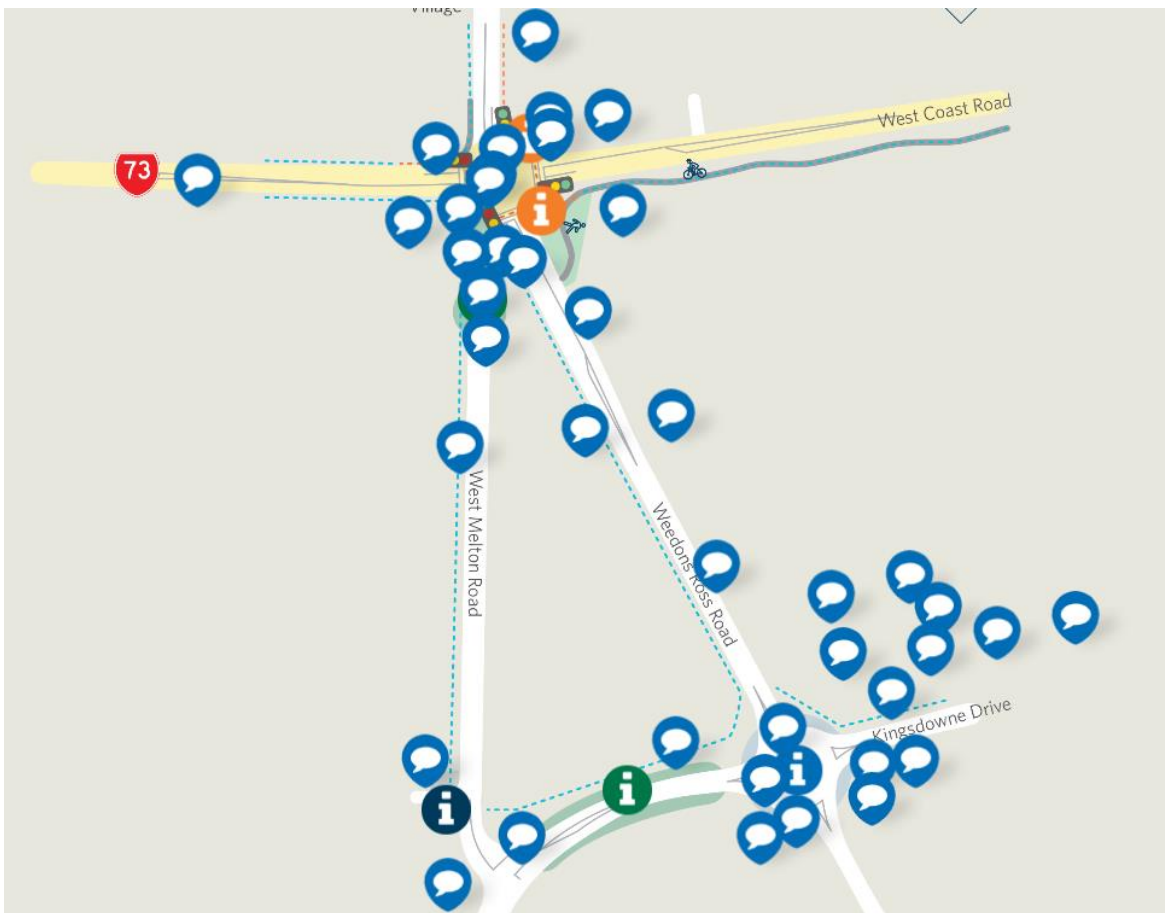
SH73 WEST MELTON PROPOSED CHANGES



- - - New pathways and crossing facilities
- - - Existing paths



West Melton residents gave feedback on post-it notes at a Community Drop-In Session on Thursday 26 November 2020.



An image showing comments on online engagement tool Social Pinpoint.

4. MAIN THEMES

Support for the design and for traffic lights at SH73 intersection

Most locals recognise that this intersection is dangerous and support having traffic lights at the intersection, and the overall design.

“We think you nailed it. Thank you”.

“I like the design. It affects the least amount of people.”

“Love it. I don’t let my children walk or bike to school at the moment, but I will now.”

“Cul-de-sac is a great idea. It will make a nicer space by the Domain. Room for more car parks?”

Support the design but would like to see additions to changes proposed

Many people like the proposed design but suggested additional changes such as left and right turning arrows at the new traffic lights, bollards to stop people driving through the closed West Melton Road, and a new bus stop for school students, as the current location by the church was not seen as safe or appropriate. Other bus stop locations such as further down Weedons Ross Road or by the West Melton School were highlighted.

“Please put in turning arrows from Weedons Ross Road. There is so much traffic wanting to head East toward town.”

Not supportive of the overall design

A small number of people do not believe there is a safety issue at the SH73 intersection and did not support the proposed changes. They did not like the idea of West Melton Road being closed off. Several residents felt the changes may create “traffic jams” and “bottlenecks”. Others worried that people may try to get around the West Melton Road closure by going through the pub property.

“Closing off West Melton Road is not ideal. I don’t see it as a safety concern myself.”

Roundabout and New Link Road supported

Many people were surprised about the new link road but were supportive of it once they understood the reasoning behind it. Some people supported the roundabout as they recognised that Weedons Ross Road was going to get busier with new residential development occurring and the Christchurch Southern Motorway opening.

“Great idea to divert traffic.”

“Roundabout here is a great idea.”

New Roundabout and new link road not supported

Some people were uncertain or concerned specifically about the roundabout and link road. There were a number of comments about possible impacts on the new Wilfield subdivision, including concern about noise, safety, a reduction in property values and a change to the rural nature of the area. Some were concerned the design would slow down traffic making access in and out of the subdivision more difficult for local residents, and the link road would increase the mix of commercial/industrial traffic at the entrance to the residential area.

Suggestions

A number of people made suggestions:

- Alternative to roundabout and link road - *“Close off Weedons Ross Road to turn it into a dead end, then widen West Melton Road to manage the increased traffic flow away from the Wilfield subdivision”.*
- More pedestrian/ cycling access and paths were wanted on the Wilfield subdivision side of Weedons Ross Road. Some people wanted to see an underpass under SH73 to the Domain to create better access.
- Safe, easy access from Wilfield subdivision to the school, with pedestrian crossings, and the bus stop moved as it is dangerously close to the intersection with SH73.

4. NEXT STEPS

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to give us feedback and share their ideas. There was a lot of support and good ideas raised. The concerns raised have been carefully considered by the project team to ensure the best possible design is developed.

Following this consideration, the high-level concept we consulted on toward the end of last year remains the best option and has been endorsed to proceed. The project team is now starting to flesh out that concept and work on the details, bearing in mind project objectives, safety and the feedback received during the consultation period. This design will then go to Waka Kotahi and the NZ Upgrade Programme Governance Team for approval.

Some of the ideas raised during the consultation period are beyond the scope of this project and where possible we have passed these ideas on to the relevant organisations.

During the next few months, we will also be working on other aspects of the process such as procurement, property negotiations and consenting.

We expect to be able to bring a detailed plan back to stakeholders and the community by the middle of the year.

