

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency
Level 1, Deloitte House
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Hamilton 3240

27 April 2022

SH1B Telephone Road Closure Extended

Dear Resident,

The current closure of the railway crossing at the southern end of State Highway 1B Telephone Road at the intersection with Holland Road will be extended while the long-term future of this intersection is decided.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency realises that this closure and detour around Seddon Road and Waverley Road is causing ongoing inconvenience for many nearby residents and we apologise for this, however this closure is necessary to ensure the safety of everyone traveling through this intersection.

In the coming days the current staffed closure will be replaced with barriers at the intersection of Telephone Road and Amber Lane and at the intersection of Telephone Road and Holland Road on the southern side of the rail crossing.

On the next page are some questions and answers about the closure.

We have a number of ways that you can keep up to date with what's happening on state highways:

- Traffic updates: journeys.nzta.govt.nz/traffic
- Facebook: facebook.com/NZTAWaikatoBoP
- Twitter: twitter.com/WakaKotahiWaiBP
- Journey planner: journeys.nzta.govt.nz
- Phone: 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 44 44 49)

Kind regards

Cara Lauder
System Manager Waikato
Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

SH1B Telephone Road rail crossing closure Q&A

Q: Why was the rail crossing closed?

The rail crossing was closed due to repeated incidents where low vehicles have damaged the railway tracks, raising the risk of a derailment for the approximately 38 trains a day which use this line.

The railway line is higher than the road on either side of it and this has caused some longer and lower trucks to scrape and dislodge sections of track as they cross.

Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail and Waikato District Council together made the decision to close the crossing while the long-term future of this intersection is decided.

This rail crossing is currently one of the most dangerous of 1300 in New Zealand by KiwiRail, using the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM).

Q: What are the options and why is it so difficult to fix?

To keep the intersection open we considered in person monitoring, however this is complex to arrange in a way that is safe for trains and cars, and for staff that have to remain on site. Also, it has proved hard to provide a guarantee against a potential future derailment, as track damage may occur that would not be picked up unless a close-up inspection took place by qualified staff.

Carrying out any inspection on the track is difficult to do safely as staff would need to be skilled in rail and road safety, and few people are available who work across both industries.

Potential engineering solutions are based around raising the level of Holland and Marshmeadow Roads so that they are at the same level as the railway crossing. This would be an expensive and highly disruptive project, complicated further by how close the intersection of Telephone Road and Holland Road is to the railway line.

A permanent solution would take some time to design and build, and it would be hard to keep traffic moving through the site during construction. Delays caused by any construction would be similar to the current detour delay, but traffic on all approaches would be delayed, not just Telephone Road traffic.

We must also consider the possibility of a permanent closure to traffic over the crossing.

Q: Why can't you let residents and/or light vehicles use the crossing?

Allowing partial access is risky as this is difficult to enforce. Both Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail believe this solution will not provide the necessary levels of safety to allow the rail crossing to reopen.

Q: How will I get into Hamilton with the rail crossing closed?

Currently the options are to use the detour around Puketaha Road, Waverley Road and Seddon Road to return to Holland Road or to use Puketaha Road on to Gordonton Road.

Q: What is the future of SH1B when the Hamilton section of the Expressway opens?

After the Hamilton section is open Telephone Road will undergo a process known as revocation, where a state highway becomes a local road and is returned to the local road controlling authority, in this case Waikato District Council.

As part of this process, Waka Kotahi and Waikato District Council need to be in agreement about the current condition of the road. Waka Kotahi and Waikato District Council are in discussions about the intersection and its future once it becomes a local road and any future decisions will take this into account.