

New Zealand Upgrade Programme

A new transport environment for Queenstown

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been holding public information sessions on the New Zealand Upgrade Programme. These projects will provide dedicated public transport infrastructure and a new roundabout at Howards Drive. The sessions included face to face, online and pop-up meetings where locals, community groups, businesses and residents asked questions around what is happening. Here we answer those questions raised by our community.

Why can't construction start straight away?

Waka Kotahi needs to complete several formal processes first. These include Resource Management Act applications and consenting requirements with Queenstown Lakes District Council [QLDC]. Property negotiations are also underway with landowners and project designs are still being worked through.

Will public transport be improved as part of this project?

The New Zealand Upgrade Programme is putting in the hard infrastructure to enable an improved public transport system. Otago Regional Council, who have responsibility for public transport, is currently working on the Queenstown Public Transport Business Case which will look at improving the service.

Why are there so many traffic signals?

A total of 18 new traffic signals will be installed across the entire NZUP programme. This excludes two existing sets of pedestrian traffic signals which will be removed and one existing set of signals which will be replaced. This is to ensure everyone (including pedestrians and cyclists) has an opportunity to cross or turn on to the highway. On SH6A the sequencing of signals can be controlled to provide gaps to cross but also provide coordinated green lights at the intersections to allow for more reliable trips along the road without substantial delay, particularly for buses.

Traffic lanes are being added at the SH6/6A intersection but these reduce to either one, or two going in all other directions, why?

More lanes are required at the intersection(s) to allow enough vehicles to get through during the green light for each leg. The traffic signals will only allow enough vehicles through so that they can merge again where the lanes reduce.

Will the improvements make it better when driving my private car?

For those choosing to drive things will stay much the same but the improvements will make it easier to access the highway. Traffic, due to growth, is close to reaching a point where the number of vehicles on the road is beyond what the road network can manage. So, the wider emphasis of the project is to help people get to where they want to go quicker, and more reliably, if they choose to catch the bus, particularly at peak times.

How will the bus lanes work?

Bus lanes provide buses space to move on congested roads and they will have priority at intersections helping provide more efficient and reliable travel times.

Why don't you build an underpass at the new SH6/6A intersection?

This was considered early in the plans but space requirements, conflicts with utilities, and difficulties of construction, precluded this.

Are you changing the speed limit?

It is likely speed limits will reduce, however this is subject to a separate review to be carried out next year.

Who will be doing the construction?

The works are being delivered for Waka Kotahi via the Kā Huanui a Tāhuna alliance in partnership with Queenstown Lakes District Council.

Why don't you build a new bridge over the Shotover?

Building an additional bridge across the Shotover River was considered during previous investigations. We recognise the bridge is a constraint and that the intersections at either side become congested - but a second bridge would not resolve this or contribute to the wider transport needs in and around Frankton or Queenstown.

Why don't you build an underpass on Ladies Mile?

An underpass was originally considered as a part of NZUP but was excluded due to the uncertainty around growth on Ladies Mile. The planning strategy for this area has identified an underpass will be needed in the future. This would need to be considered separately as part of any plans for future development in the area.

Why are you replacing roundabouts at SH6/6A intersection, Lucas Place, Hawthorne Drive and Grant Road?

Traffic signals at these junctions will allow us to manage traffic more effectively particularly as growth continues. It also helps provide for pedestrians, cyclists and bus priority.

Are you removing general traffic lanes to make way for bus lanes?

Yes, one lane from Grant Road to Hawthorne Drive will become a bus lane. However, additional turning lanes will be added to the new intersections to accommodate turning traffic.

When can I expect to see more plans?

Designs are still being developed but will be shared once available.

Are you including provision for walking and cycling?

Yes, a separated walking and cycling path will be provided along SH6, from the old Shotover Bridge to Hardware Lane, connecting to the new SH6/6A intersection and on to the Kawarau Road. This will also link via Gray Street.

Why don't you build an additional lane on SH6A?

During the initial business case this was considered but ruled out due to the challenging geology and the social and financial impact on property due to the number that would be removed.

When will construction start?

Utility investigations to help inform the design are underway however main works are not expected to start until the middle of next year.

For a full list of Frequently Asked Questions click here

