

2 Waihi to Ōmokoroa

Engagement summary



Project overview

The project is making State Highway 2 (SH2) between Waihi and Ōmokoroa safer for everyone who uses this road. Work to improve this 40km stretch of corridor, including road and shoulder widening, installing a wide centreline, flexible road safety barriers in high-risk areas, and intersection improvements, has been underway since 2019.

The safety of the road will be boosted further with the installation of flexible median barriers and additional intersection upgrades to provide safe turnaround points between Tetley Road and Esdaile Road.

The design solutions and improvements included in this project are about keeping people safe, saving lives and reduce the risk of crashes.

This project is being delivered as part of Road to Zero, Aotearoa New Zealand's road safety strategy, which aims to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on New Zealand's roads by 40 percent by 2050.

Purpose of engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to inform the public on progress to-date and the work programme ahead including:

- Share progress on the detailed design of flexible median barriers and roundabouts, explaining the 'why' and communicating the expected timeframes for installation / construction.
- Update the community on the safety improvements project, including what has been delivered so far and what's left to complete.
- Be present in the community to answer questions and speak to local people.
- Provide an opportunity to share updates on other SH2 Corridor projects relevant to these communities.

Community open days

Two community open days were held at the Digital Hub, Katikati Library on 4 May (12-2pm) and 6 May (4-6pm). The two-hour sessions were interactive with Waka Kotahi project staff, mana whenua and subject matter experts from contractors BECA and HEB in attendance and available to answer questions from members of the public.

Format

The community event was arranged to meet with local people and share information and updates about the project as we begin the new phase of work to upgrade intersections ahead of installing flexible median barrier. The event also provided a good opportunity to connect with the broader community, listen to their questions and concerns, and share information about what is happening on site, the improvements to date and what to expect next.

The event was set up with long plot map of the near complete design of the median barriers to look at, displays with poster boards and handouts to take away, videos (Rea/Tetley drone footage, 2018/2022 corridor comparison video and a potential head on crash prevented by median barrier) to watch.

Promotion

The open days were advertised extensively in local newspapers, online sites such as SunMedia, geo-targeted on Neighbourly and stuff.co.nz, local community network communication channels, sponsored posts on Waka Kotahi social media sites, and through organic reach on community organisations and individual members social media pages. Leaflet drops at community sites from Waihi to Tauranga including Ōmokoroa, and an email invitation was sent to the Waihi to Tauranga projects subscribers.

Sentiment

Eighty-three people attended the community open days, and the feedback was informed by the work already done on the project, with roundabouts being the most frequent topic of conversation. Safety, particularly that of school children while travelling to and from school, either in school buses or by car, was also raised as an issue.

The most significant concern about median barriers was access for emergency vehicles to negotiate the way through traffic easily, and also the loss of ability to turn right for some members of the community.

The inability to turn right was also raised as the extra kilometres to the nearest roundabout added to carbon emissions which appeared in conflict to the current government policy of reducing emissions.

There was very little interest in speed management apart from a curiosity about what the speed would return to on the corridor after the project is completed.

Overall, the sentiment of those who attended the open days was one of curiosity and interest in the areas that most directly affected them. There were positive comments about the work done to date but also a desire to see the project finished so that the disruptions experienced could be over. There was an appreciation of the opportunity the open days provided to be able to meet those who work on the project 'face-to-face' and have their questions answered.



Themes

Topic

Examples of comments

Roundabouts



It makes no sense to build a roundabout at Morton Road and not one at Work Road. Construct a 'seagull' island at Work Road to avoid adverse driver behaviour.

The shape of the Morton Road roundabout is dangerous, the southbound alignment too aggressive.

The gap between the Apata Station Road North roundabout and Morton Road at 3.8km is too far.

As the landscaping grows it restricts visibility through the roundabout, and cars suddenly appear from the right.

People liked travelling through the Rea/Tetley roads roundabout but didn't like Morton Road so much.

When will the roundabouts be finished?

Safety & Schools



With the widening the roads feel much safer now.

Having to take more risks when turning right out of driveway due to increased traffic volumes.

Request to see updated CAS stats. Have they dropped with work done to date and lower speed limit?

The median barrier and roundabout will be hugely disruptive to the school bus routes and the ability to uplift students.

Want more traffic calming in the vicinity of the Pahoia School.

With the widening north of Esdaile Road, and construction of the roundabout, we will be unable to walk kids along the highway to school.

Informal school bus stops – parents need safe places to park on side of road/side road to drop off/pick up students, as well as a safe spot for buses to stop.

Median Barriers



With the median barrier, emergency vehicles will get stuck in the traffic and people will die.

The median barrier and roundabout will be hugely disruptive to the school bus routes and the ability to uplift students.

Tell us why/where else in NZ there are median barriers in place with so many side roads and driveways, and where subdivision is increasing?

Carbon reduction /sustainability



How is making people drive further in their vehicles align with the Government position on sustainability?

Safety vs sustainability/emissions of having to drive an extra 6km 2x a day to drop kids at school. Also, this approach isn't consistent with reducing emissions.

Cyclists



Cyclists who cross the highway from Pahoia Road to Esdaile Road will be prevented from doing this when the roundabout is constructed.

The slow vehicle lane between Mathers Road and Old Tauranga Road is great for cyclists who slow down to head up the hill.

Safe pull over areas



Will the works limit the ability for vehicles to pull over and change a wheel or deal with other emergency events.

Noise



Truck engine breaking entering the roundabouts.

Timeframes



Why does it take 18 months to build a roundabout?

Why aren't you building the roundabouts in sequence?

Bridges



Why are you not widening/replacing bridges and what about the resilience of the bridges i.e., flooding.

Next steps

1. Project team to follow up on:

- Discuss bus routes with Ministry of Education
- Sketch Seagull arrangement for Works Road and discuss with Waka Kotahi SME
- Consider additional barrier on approach to Lund Road
- Review performance of slow lane in vicinity of Fire Station – Athenree Gorge
- Visit Pahoia School and update on project and discuss issues raised

2. [Frequently Asked Questions](#) have been updated based on engagement feedback and questions raised.



For more information visit the project webpage:



www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh2-waihi-to-tauranga-corridor/sh2-waihi-to-omokoroa