



# Waitara to Bell Block Safety Improvements

## Kia whakahaumaru tēnei rori



Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is working towards a future where nobody is killed or seriously injured in crashes in Aotearoa.

State Highway (SH3) between Waitara and Bell Block is an important route for commuters, local communities and freight, but too many friends and whanau have lost their lives or been injured travelling on this road.

**Seventeen people died and 24 were seriously injured between 2015 and 2020.**

Many of these crashes occurred when people failed to give way or lost control at the intersections of Princess Street, Waitara Road, SH3A (Mountain Road) and Airport Drive.

We've been working with our project partners Manukorihi, Ngāti Rahiri, Otaraua, Pukerangiora and Puketapu Hapū and Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa and New Plymouth District Council to progress safety improvements for this route, including roundabouts for the high-risk intersections, other intersection improvements, median barrier, wide centrelines and rumble strips.

Following the commitment of additional funding for the project in July this year, we are aiming to start construction of the Princess Street Roundabout this summer.

### Background

In 2018, we engaged with the community, transport representatives, emergency services and councils to investigate safety improvements for SH3 between Waitara and Bell Block.

Designs for safety improvements were developed, but we were unable to secure funding to progress the project further at that time.

In February 2019, the government committed \$29 million towards the project. We began detailed design of the safety improvements with the intention of applying for additional funding required for construction from the National Land Transport Programme. Some early safety improvements were also made to the route, and following public consultation, the speed limit was made a consistent 80km/h.

Investigative and early design works identified some challenges associated with the initial designs for the intersection improvements, including significant stormwater, land and funding requirements.

On discovering it would take several years to progress the original roundabout concept designs to construction, we worked with New Plymouth District Council and iwi to refine the designs.

The refined roundabout concepts are slightly reduced in size but they will achieve the safety benefits we are aiming for and are appropriate for current and future traffic volumes. We have taken into account the feedback the community provided in 2018.



## Princess Street Roundabout - draft design

We are planning to build the roundabout at Princess Street first as this intersection has the highest safety risk.

**There were 17 crashes at this intersection in the last five years - more than any of the other intersections along the route.**

This intersection provides access on and off the highway for the 7000 Waitara residents.

There are currently 8500 vehicles on average using this intersection daily. Over the next 25 years, we expect this number to grow to about 13,500.

The new roundabout will make this intersection much safer for the Waitara community and everyone using the road.



### Princess Street Underpass

An underpass will also be built as part of the Princess Street intersection upgrade to provide safer access across the highway for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Making sure people feel safe using the underpass has been a key priority of the design. The intersection and underpass will be lit at night, and it is designed so users can see right through the underpass before entering.**

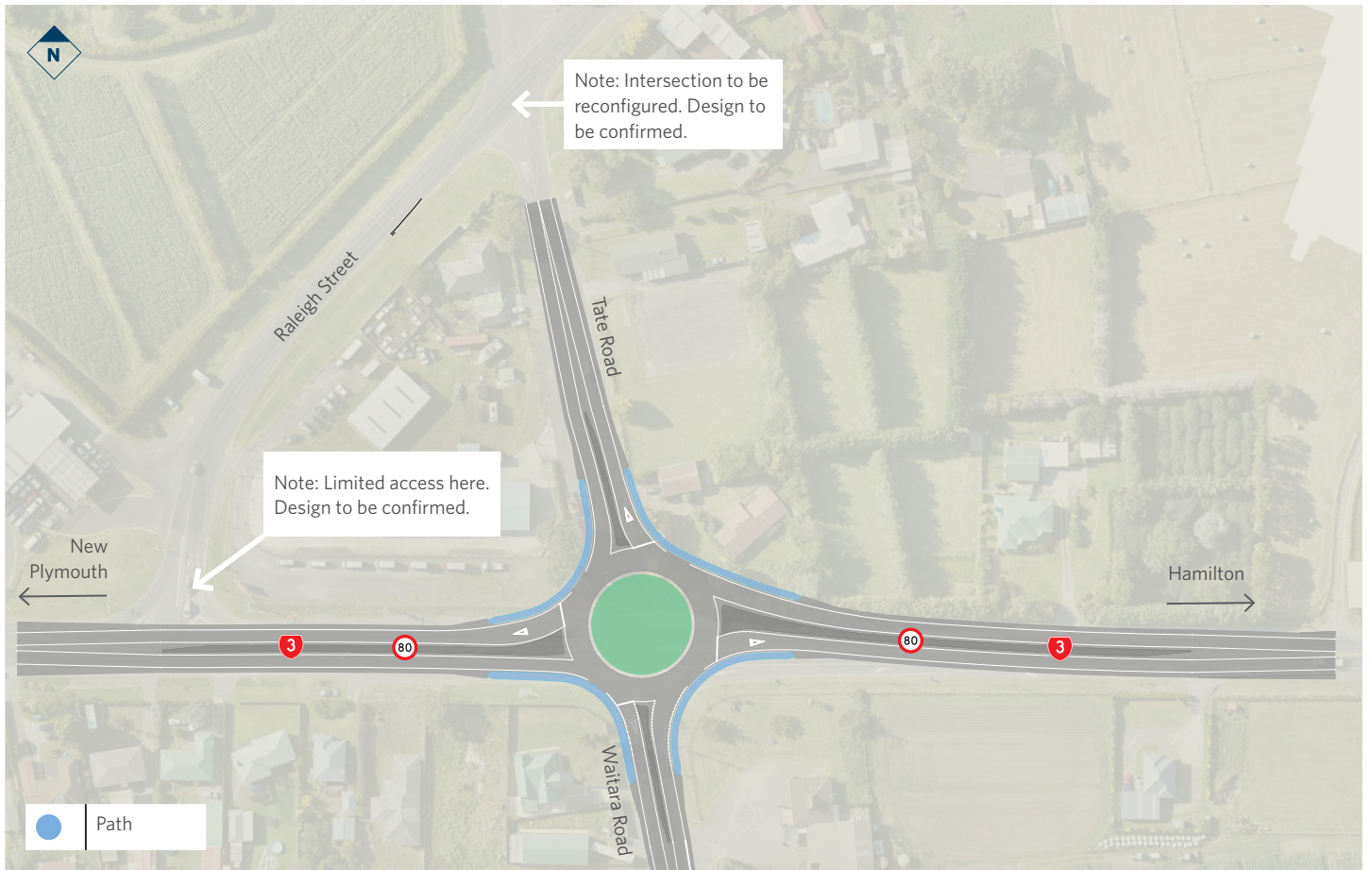
### Managing stormwater at Princess Street

As part of this project we are working with our project partners to incorporate significant improvements to stormwater management in the catchments near Princess Street. This work is being coordinated with other New Plymouth District Council-led stormwater improvements in Waitara. Our aim is to start constructing these stormwater improvements before Christmas.

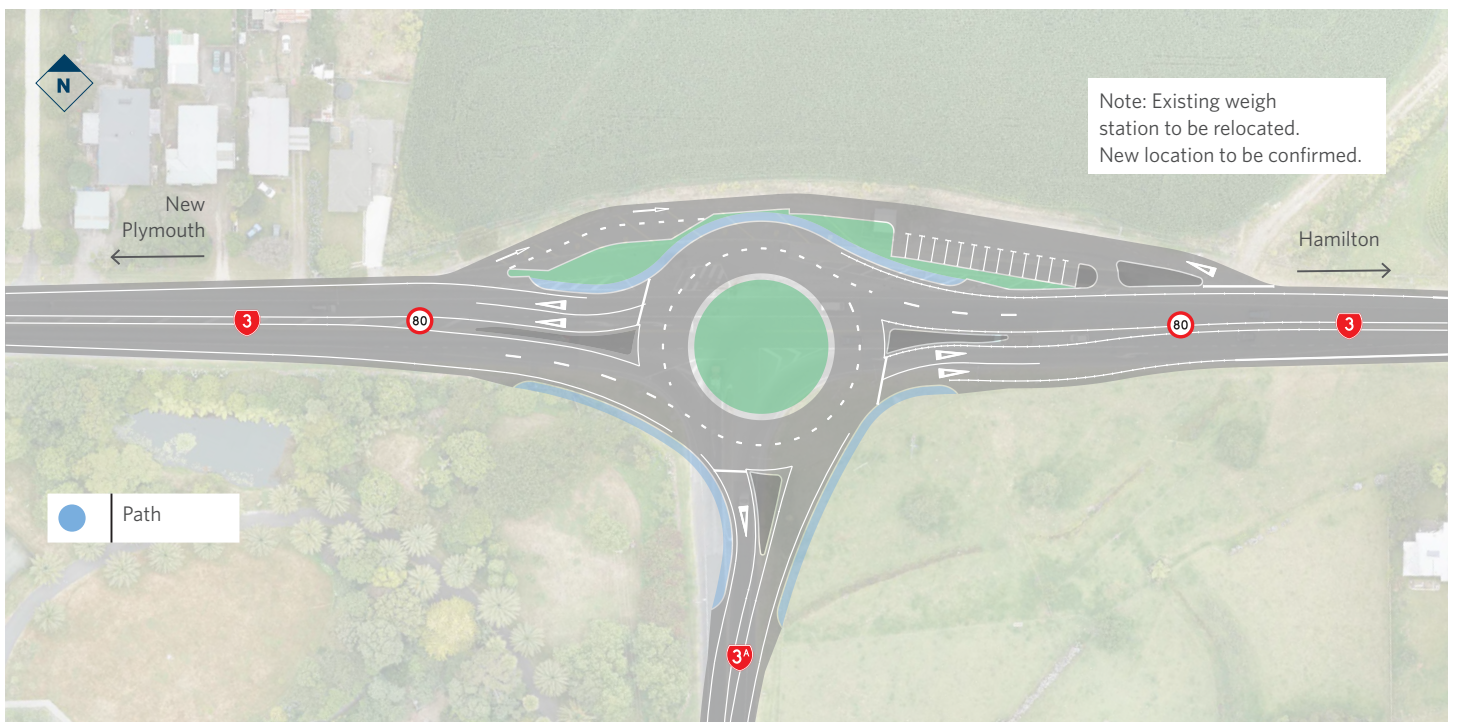




## Waitara Road Roundabout concept



## SH3A (Mountain Road) Roundabout concept



### Road to Zero - our road safety strategy

SH3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements are delivering to New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy, Road to Zero 2020 - 2030, which aims to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by 40% over the next decade.

## De Havilland Drive Roundabout concept



## Flexible safety barriers – your safety net

Once the roundabouts are built, we'll install flexible median barrier on some sections of the road to prevent head-on crashes.

We know that flexible median barriers work at keeping people safe. They stand between you and oncoming traffic. This means if someone loses control or drifts across the centreline, the result isn't a deadly head-on crash.

Flexible road safety barriers 'catch' vehicles that leave their lane before they hit something less forgiving – like other vehicles or roadside hazards such as trees, poles and ditches.

When a vehicle hits a barrier, the high-tension wire cables flex, slowing down the vehicle and keeping it upright during and after a collision.

The barrier absorbs the impact, reducing the force on the people in the vehicle. Flexible road safety barriers are designed so they don't penetrate the passenger compartment of a vehicle.

When the barriers are in place, there will be changes to how some people access their properties.

Closer to the time, we'll consult with residents and property owners on the changes and make safety improvements to their accessways if required.

### What's happening when?



\* The order of construction of the roundabouts other than Princess Street isn't yet confirmed. We will decide the order once we have a better understanding of timeframes for obtaining consents and land at each of the intersections.

### Have questions or want to share your views? Get in touch

Email: [w2bb@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:w2bb@nzta.govt.nz)

Phone: **021 502 193**

Community drop-in information sessions will be held in November if COVID-19 alert levels permit.

Sign up to receive email updates and find further information about the project at [www.nzta.govt.nz/w2bb](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/w2bb)