



Engagement Summary and Decisions Report

Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing removal



February 2024

Overview

We have recently started work to remove some level crossings before the City Rail Link (CRL) opens to the public, including 7 pedestrian level crossings across the rail network and 1 road level crossing at Church Street East in Penrose.

Removing our pedestrian level crossings is required to reduce the risk of serious injury or death, and therefore receive regulatory approval from Waka Kotahi, before we introduce more frequent trains after CRL opens to the public.

Community engagement on Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossings has provided us with valuable feedback about how we can improve the alternative route before we remove the level crossing.

Level Crossing Removal Programme

We are planning to introduce a rail network with new services and timetables after the CRL opens.

These new services and timetables will mean that train frequencies will increase by 100% in some areas. This will mean that the barrier arms at some level crossings will be closed more often, impacting our wider transport network and causing more people to take risks due to the frustration of delays.

To improve safety at level crossings, and to support growth on our rail network, we have developed a Level Crossing Removal Programme (LXRP).

The LXRP takes a long-term approach to remove all level crossings over the next 10 to 30 years.

We have worked in close partnership with KiwiRail and Waka Kotahi to develop this programme.

- **Waka Kotahi** is responsible for monitoring and setting the regulations for rail safety in New Zealand. These regulations are designed to manage the safety risks, including risks faced by Auckland Transport and our rail operators.
- **KiwiRail** is planning for significant growth in freight across the Auckland region and will operate more regular freight trains to support this growth. The Level Crossing Removal Programme will support KiwiRail in operating more frequent freight trains.

We are continuing to investigate the possible solutions for removing our more complex rail level crossings, including road level crossings and level crossings connected to train stations. Possible solutions for these crossings may include grade separation or full closure.

Pedestrian Level Crossing Removal project

Removing our pedestrian level crossings is required to reduce the risk of serious injury or death, and therefore receive regulatory approval from Waka Kotahi, before we introduce more frequent trains after CRL opens to the public.

We are removing 7 pedestrian level crossings at the following 6 locations:

- **O’Neills Road, Swanson**
- **Corban Estate, Henderson**
- **Tironui Station Road East, Takaanini**
- **Kingdon Street, Newmarket**
- **Lloyd Avenue, Mt Albert**
- **Homai Station** (There are 2 level crossings at Homai Station)

To ensure we comply with existing safety regulations, and to support our case for receiving regulatory approval from Waka Kotahi, we will also implement a range of safety upgrades at other road level crossings.

These pedestrian level crossing removals and upgrades are required to demonstrate to Waka Kotahi that we have reduced the risk of an incident, such as a near miss or collision, before CRL opens.

Community engagement

We engaged with the Mount Albert community regarding the removal of Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing from 31 July to August 27, 2023.

Community engagement has provided us with valuable feedback about how we can improve the alternative route before we remove the level crossing.

Community engagement did not focus on the removal itself because of the safety regulations which we must comply with. Our engagement was about how we can improve the alternative route.

We genuinely appreciate and thank our communities for taking the time to provide their feedback and suggestions.

Engagement Snapshot

Feedback focused on how we can improve the alternative routes for **3** pedestrian level crossings.

Feedback from over **1,500** local residents and businesses in total

Feedback from **436** responses via our online survey

Feedback from **21** people across six community drop-in events

Feedback from **20** responses via freepost feedback forms

Ambassadors interacted with over **800** people at the level crossings, across two days during peak hours.

1,100 letters delivered to local residents and businesses

Feedback via the Mount Albert Residents Association meeting attended by **25** people.

More than **4,589** unique visits to the project webpage.

Our Engagement Approach

What did we engage about?

We worked with the Mount Albert community to understand how people currently use the Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing, how the removal will impact them, and how we can make the alternative route easier and safer to use.

Community engagement did not focus on the removal itself because of the safety regulations which we must comply with. Our engagement was about how we can improve the alternative route.

How did we engage?

We engaged with a variety of community groups, accessibility groups, local businesses, and residents, including the Mount Albert Residents Association.

Our community engagement involved:

- **Community drop-in events** – AT hosted two drop-in events to talk directly with affected communities. These events were hosted at **Mount Albert War Memorial Hall**:
 - 4:00pm – 6:00pm, Thursday 10 August 2023
 - 11:00am – 1:00pm, Saturday 12 August 2023
- **An online survey** – We provided an online survey accessible via the AT website. People were encouraged to submit feedback via AT Ambassadors, posters, and flyers distributed at the level crossing.
- **Letters to residents and businesses** – We delivered letters to residents and businesses near the level crossings. This letter contained information about the removals, a link to the online survey, and a feedback form to return written feedback to AT.

When did we engage?

Community feedback was open from Monday 31 July to Sunday 27 August.

Why did we engage?

We acknowledge that the Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing is a useful connection for some people walking or cycling, and we acknowledge that the removal of this crossing will cause some inconvenience.

To understand this impact, we engaged with local communities about how or why they use the existing level crossing, and how we can improve the alternative route to make it easier and safer to use. We value community feedback as the best source of information for these improvements.

Engagement did not focus on the removal itself because of the safety regulations which we must comply with. More information about these regulations is provided on page 3.

Lloyd Avenue Pedestrian Level Crossing Removal

What you shared with us

Summary of key feedback themes

Community feedback has provided us with a better understanding of how people currently use the Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing, how its removal will impact them, and how we can improve the alternative route via Carrington Road.

The 7 key themes from the feedback are:

- 1. The inconvenience and safety of Carrington Road**
- 2. Our recommended improvements**
- 3. Safety of the level crossing**
- 4. Build a bridge or underpass**
- 5. Timing of the removal and improvements**
- 6. Support for the removal**
- 7. Impacts of the removal**

Theme 1: The inconvenience and safety of Carrington Road

What you said:

49% of respondents (81 out of 166 responses) told us that Carrington Road is unsafe for people walking and cycling, particularly for school children, the elderly, or people in mobility scooters.

There are a several factors affecting the safety of Carrington Road:

- Carrington Road is wide and congested with too many cars, which has created a noisy, polluted, and unpleasant environment for walking and cycling.
- Unsafe driver behavior, vehicle speeds, and high traffic volumes on Carrington Road.
- The pathways on the Carrington Road overbridge are too narrow and currently do not provide enough room for some people to pass each other, including mothers with prams or people in mobility scooters.
- There is no handrailing on the west side of the bridge, and handrailing on the east side does not feel safe.
- The curbs across the Carrington Road overbridge are too high and, combined with the narrow path width, make pathways feel dangerous.
- Cycle lanes across the Carrington Road overbridge are not separated from road traffic.

17% of respondents (29 out of 166 responses) also told us that using Carrington Road will add significant distance and inconvenience with the need to walk around, and the gradient of the overbridge is too steep for some people.

Our response:

We acknowledge the concerns related to the safety and inconvenience of Carrington Road.

The Carrington Road Improvements project will address some of these concerns by improving safety and access for everyone. This is a separate AT project to upgrade Carrington Road between Point Chevalier and Mt Albert town centres.

For more information about the Carrington Road Improvements project, we encourage you to visit the AT website at at.govt.nz/carrington

In response to community feedback, we will:

- 1. Replace the existing footpath across the Carrington Road rail overbridge with a safer, wider shared path.**

We will combine the existing cycle lane and footpath to create a safer, wider shared path. This would provide additional space, safety, and other amenity improvements for people walking and cycling without impacting traffic.

The shared path will be designed to provide an affordable interim solution before we remove the level crossing, and will be future proofed for the Carrington Road Improvement project.

Works to install the new shared path will begin in March 2024 ahead of the level crossing removal in mid-2024.

- 2. Investigate further widening of the Carrington Road rail overbridge as part of the Carrington Road Improvements project.**

This would supplement the widening of the footpath to support the future growth expected along Carrington Road. Initial assessments indicate that this may be possible via a cantilever on the East side only.

Potentially widening the overbridge will be subject to funding, further investigations, and design work undertaken by the Carrington Road Improvements project team.

Work on the Carrington Road Improvements is currently planned for 2025 – 2026.

We also acknowledge that the existing pedestrian level crossing may be the shortest or fastest option for some people. However, most trips will start or end some distance away from the crossing, and using Carrington Road will not add significant distance for most people.

Theme 2: Our recommended improvements

What you said – Bike separators on Carrington Road:

18% of respondents (31 out of 166 responses) provided feedback relating to the bike separators we recommended across the Carrington Road rail overbridge.

14 responses supported the separators and agreed they would improve safety for people on bikes.

7 responses did not support the separators, expressed concerns relating to narrow road space, and suggested that the separators would worsen traffic congestion.

10 responses agreed that changes to Carrington Road overbridge are needed to improve safety for people on bikes but explained that the recommended bike separators are not enough to compensate for the significant loss in safety, convenience and amenity caused by removal of the Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing. This included suggestions such as:

- Widen the Carrington Road overbridge via cantilever to provide additional space for walking and cycling.
- Replace the existing cycle lanes with wider shared paths or cycleways that are separated from the roadway.

Our response:

We understand the need to improve the safety of Carrington Road rail overbridge for people on bikes. We also recognise the challenges of making these improvements without negatively impacting traffic, including buses or anyone who may need to drive.

In response to community feedback, we will:

- **Replace the existing footpath across the Carrington Road rail overbridge with a safer, wider shared path.**

We will combine the existing cycle lane and footpath to create a safer, wider shared path. This would provide additional space, safety, and other amenity improvements for people walking and cycling without impacting traffic.

The shared path will be designed to provide an affordable interim solution before we remove the level crossing, and will be future proofed for the Carrington Road Improvement project.

Works to install the new shared path will begin in March 2024 ahead of the level crossing removal in mid-2024.

Theme 2: Our recommended improvements

What you said – Signalised pedestrian crossing on Carrington Road:

26% of respondents (44 out of 166 responses) provided feedback relating to the signalised pedestrian crossing we recommended near the Carrington Road / Prospero Terrace intersection.

14 responses supported this crossing because it would improve access to Mount Albert Train Station and improve safety for crossing Carrington Road. This included 1 local resident who suggested relocating the crossing closer to Counsel Terrace to improve access to local bus stops.

30 responses did not support the crossing and suggested that it would worsen traffic congestion. Some respondents told us that the crossing would not benefit them as their journey does not involve crossing to the west side of Carrington Road. This feedback was mainly shared by parents with children at Gladstone Primary School, including the school's Walking School Bus.

Our response:

We acknowledge the concerns raised by the community regarding the signalised pedestrian crossing. We also acknowledge the suggestion to relocate the crossing closer to local bus stops.

In response, we will undertake an additional traffic assessment for the area to reassess the need for this crossing and, if it is needed, confirm the most suitable location.

This assessment will be completed after removing Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing in mid-2024. This will provide a more accurate understanding of travel patterns and better support our planning for a new signalised crossing on Carrington Road.

Theme 2: Our recommended improvements

What you said – Speed bumps on Prospero Terrace:

17% of respondents (29 out of 166 responses) provided feedback relating to the speed bumps we recommended on Prospero Terrace.

11 responses supported the speed bumps to help reduce the amount of through-traffic and to reduce vehicle speeds. These issues were mainly described by residents on Prospero Terrace.

16 responses did not support the speed bumps because vehicles are already driving slow on Prospero Terrace. This is because parked cars reduce the street to one lane and require drivers to slow down and give way to oncoming vehicles. These issues were often described by visitors to the area, such as parents dropping off children at school or daycare.

2 responses suggested changing Prospero Terrace to a one-way street to improve safety and traffic flow.

Our response:

Our road safety audit recommended us to install a speed hump on Prospero Terrace to supplement existing traffic calming measures, including the narrow road space and 'slow zone' signage.

A speed bump will physically require drivers to slow down rather than residents relying on the individual choices of drivers. This is supported by feedback from residents which shared concerns about through-traffic and vehicle speeds on Prospero Terrace.

Unfortunately, changing the Prospero Terrace to a one-way street cannot be included within the scope of this project.

Works to install the speed bump will begin in March 2024 ahead of the level crossing removal in mid-2024.

Theme 3: Safety of the level crossing

What you said:

50% of respondents (82 out of 166 responses) provided feedback relating to the safety of the level crossing.

76 responses explained that the existing level crossing is the safest option for people walking and cycling because of the following reasons:

- There are automatic safety gates, safety bells, and good sightlines along the tracks.
- There has never been an incident at this level crossing.
- Carrington Road is unsafe and a more dangerous route (details on page 7).
- The likelihood of an incident at the level crossing is less than the likelihood of an accident involving a car on New North Road or Carrington Road.

Removing the level crossing would also increase safety risks as people would continue to cross the tracks in the same location after the level crossing is removed.

6 responses suggested that near misses at the level crossing are frequent and expressed support for removing the level crossing to prevent a death in the community.

Our response:

Automatic safety gates can prevent unsafe behavior and crossing attempts. However, over time we have observed pedestrians pressing the emergency release button and crossing in front of oncoming trains, school children climbing over the safety gates while they are closed, or prams becoming stuck in the tracks as people cross. This release button is necessary to meet accessibility requirements related to wheelchair users. This option is therefore not 100% effective at preventing serious injury or death.

Community feedback has also suggested that near misses at the level crossing are frequent and expressed support for removing the level crossing to prevent a death in the community.

While a collision with a pedestrian has not occurred at this location, there have been several near misses despite the automatic safety gates. Collisions with pedestrians have occurred, and continue to occur, across our rail network.

We will not wait for a collision to occur at this location to justify removing the level crossing.

Based on community feedback, we will make improvements to the alternative route to ensure it can support safe access for walking and cycling after the level crossing is removed.

We will also install fencing after removing the level crossing to prevent people crossing the tracks at the same location.

Theme 4: Build a bridge or underpass.

What you said:

Approximately 9% of feedback (15 out of 166 responses) suggested we build a bridge or underpass to improve safety while retaining a connection at this location.

We acknowledge the feedback from Gladstone Primary School which recognised the need to remove safety risks at the level crossing, but also emphasised the need to retain pedestrian connectivity and safe access to the school.

Our response:

We are currently experiencing significant funding constraints as we address a funding shortfall. All level crossings, including road level crossings, are assessed based on a range of factors including their safety risk, operational requirements, and their role in the wider transport network. Based on this assessment, and with the limited funding available, it is important to look at the relative priority of each level crossing.

Auckland Transport will continue to lobby for additional funding to minimise the impact on all communities as much as possible.

However, initial assessments completed during the Business Case stage indicated that low usage and the availability of alternative routes meant that, in the current financial circumstances, an overbridge or underpass is not financially viable at Lloyd Avenue relative to other level crossings across the network.

Our initial assessments also showed that, due to the confined space and gradient of Lloyd Avenue, construction of an overbridge or underpass will be:

- Disruptive to neighbours during construction.
- More expensive and larger in scale relative to other locations.
- Detrimental to visual amenity due to the scale of infrastructure required.
- Impacting access to driveways for neighbouring properties.

These impacts are because:

- An overbridge would require a taller than normal structure to the south to enable safe clearance for the overhead wires.
- An underpass would require several switchbacks to the north so the ramp gradient can comply with accessibility requirements.

Theme 5: Timing of the removal and improvements

What you said:

Approximately 6% of feedback (10 out of 166 responses) provided feedback related to the timing of the removal and improvements.

7 responses told us that removing the level crossing as soon as possible is important to prevent a potential death within the community.

3 responses told us that improvements to the alternative route must be made before removing the level crossing. This is critical to ensure that Carrington Road is safe to accommodate the additional foot traffic, including students at Gladstone Primary School, mothers with prams and people with other mobility needs.

Our response:

Works to install the alternative route improvements will begin in March 2024 ahead of the level crossing removal in mid-2024.

More detail about these improvements is provided on pages 9, 10, 11.

Theme 6: Support for the removal

What you said:

Approximately 5% of feedback (8 out of 166 responses) expressed their support for removing Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing.

The supportive feedback told us while it would be nice to retain a walking and cycling connection at this location, it is more important to prevent a serious injury or death within the Mount Albert community. These respondents were aware of the increasing number of incidents at level crossings and, in general, agreed that removing the level crossing is the best option going forward.

This feedback was also concerned that an underpass would be prone to flooding, too expressive and attract antisocial behavior. An overbridge is also unnecessary with Carrington Road being so close, provided that safety on the overbridge is improved.

Our response:

Thank you for your feedback. While engagement did not focus on the removal itself because of the safety regulations which we must comply with, we appreciate your awareness of the safety risks at level crossings and your support for the project.

Theme 7: Impacts of the removal

What you said:

Approximately 64% of feedback (106 out of 166 responses) was opposed to the removal or expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts of the removal. These potential impacts are outlined below.

- **Travel choice:**

Removing the level crossing would result in less people walking and cycling, and more people driving, due to the inconvenient and unsafe nature of Carrington Road (details on page 7). This is a key concern for Gladstone Primary School as a reduction in pedestrian connectivity results in more children being dependent on school drop-offs and pick-ups. This would increase safety risks, carbon emissions and congestion around the wider community.

- **Access to schools**

The level crossing is an important link and safe route for school children at local schools, including Gladstone Primary School and Mount Albert Grammar School, and the catchments of both schools extend over the railway.

Traffic management is a key concern for local schools requiring ongoing supervision by school staff. The schools actively manage the safety of adjacent streets before and after school times. Schools actively encourage walking and cycling to reduce congestion during these times, and the removal of Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing will undermine this.

The level crossing is used regularly by the Gladstone Primary School Walking School Bus. The unsafe nature of Carrington Road (details on page 7) means that the level crossing is currently the only viable option for the Walking School Bus.

- **Community segregation**

Removing the level crossing would segregate the community and create issues relating to accessibility, connectivity, and walkability. People need to access homes, shops, services, and jobs on both sides of the railway, and providing additional crossing points is important to support walking and cycling access around the community in this regard.

- **Urban development and growth**

Increasing urban development and population growth in the area will require walking and cycling infrastructure to support access for new residents. This growth means the level crossing is likely to be used more regularly, providing good justification to retain the level crossing.

- **Local business:**

Removing the level crossing would negatively impact local businesses on New North Road.

Our response to feedback opposed to the removal:

Removing our pedestrian level crossings is required to reduce the risk of serious injury or death, and therefore receive regulatory approval from Waka Kotahi, before we introduce more frequent trains after CRL opens to the public.

Community engagement did not focus on the removal itself because of the safety regulations which we must comply with. Our engagement was about how we can improve the alternative route.

More detail about these regulations is provided on page 3.

Our response to the potential impacts:

- **Travel choice**

We acknowledge the concerns related to the inconvenience and safety of Carrington Road. The Carrington Road Improvements project will provide safer and more accessible transport choices for everyone, making walking, cycling and public transport easier.

Based on community feedback, we will make interim improvements to the alternative route ahead of the Carrington Road Improvements project and the level crossing removal. .

More detail about these improvements is provided on pages 9, 10, 11.

- **Access to schools:**

We acknowledge the impact of the removal on local schools, including the Gladstone Primary School Walking School Bus. We will make interim improvements to Carrington Road to help support safe access for school children until the Carrington Road Improvements project is completed.

More detail about these improvements is provided on pages 9, 10, 11.

- **Community segregation:**

Auckland Transport will continue to lobby for additional funding to minimise the impact on communities as much as possible.

However, initial assessments indicated that an overbridge or underpass is not a priority for this location relative to other level crossings across the network. Our initial assessments also showed that, due to the confined space and gradient of Lloyd Avenue, construction of a bridge or underpass would be highly disruptive.

We encourage you to read more information about a bridge or underpass on page 13.

- **Urban development and growth:**

Urban development and population growth around Mount Albert, combined with the planned increases in rail frequency, will increase the likelihood of an incident. Removal will ensure we can prevent a potential incident before one can occur.

- **Local business:**

Over time we have observed pedestrians pressing the emergency release button and crossing in front of oncoming trains, school children climbing over the safety gates while they are closed, or prams becoming stuck in the tracks as people cross.

While a collision with a pedestrian has not occurred at this location, it has occurred and continues to occur across our rail network. We emphasise that the impacts of these incidents are felt by everyone, including the emotional impacts on family, train drivers and witnesses, and impacts caused by network closures as emergency services respond.

We understand that the removal may require people to walk an additional 5 minutes to some specific businesses. However, we emphasise that the removal will ensure that people can continue these journeys safely without incident.

Other areas of interest

During our community engagement, we also heard about some other topics that were outside of the scope of our project that we would like to address.

For the Lloyd Avenue pedestrian level crossing, feedback revealed 1 topic of this nature:

Traffic Lights at the New North Road / Carrington Road Intersection

Approximately 5% of feedback (9 out of 166 responses) raised concerns relating to recent changes to the sequencing of traffic lights at the New North Road / Carrington Road intersection.

This feedback told us that these changes have worsened congestion and encouraged dangerous driver behavior, including running red lights and speeding before the intersection to avoid red lights. This has contributed to the safety issues on Carrington Road (details on page 7).

Our response:

We acknowledge the concerns regarding the changes to the sequencing of traffic lights at this location. We will communicate this feedback to the relevant team and work towards a solution that improves traffic without compromising safety for walking and cycling on Carrington Road.

Low patronage on trains

1 of the 166 responses we received told us that train services are not well used and do not need to be made more frequent – Do not increase the frequency of trains and do not remove the level crossing.

Our response:

Auckland Transport has recorded that public transport patronage is currently 84% of pre-covid levels. We are also on track to recover 100% of pre-covid levels before CRL opens to the public.

Our Level Crossing Removal Programme forms part of a multibillion-dollar rail development programme, which includes a range of projects delivered in partnership by Auckland Transport, KiwiRail and Waka Kotahi to support further patronage growth in the future.