



Engagement Summary and Decisions Report

Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing removal



February 2024



Overview

We have recently started work to remove some level crossings before 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 Kingdon Street 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 City Rail Link (CRL) opens to the public.

These new services and timetables will mean that train frequencies will increase by 100% in some areas. This will mean that the barrier arms and automatic safety gates 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 adopts a long-term approach and will remove our level crossings in phases 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 faced by all rail participants, including 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 to operate 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 Newmarket community regarding the removal of Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing from 31 July to August 27 2023.

Our community engagement has provided us with valuable feedback, including local concerns about the removal, the alternative route, and how we can improve the alternative route.

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 to make it easier and safer to use.

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 from the Newmarket Business Association

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



Our Engagement Approach

What did we engage about?

We worked with the Newmarket community to understand how people currently use the Kingdon Street 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 Newmarket Business 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 **Parnell Library**:
 - 4:00pm – 6:00pm, Thursday 24 August 2023
 - 11:00am – 1:00pm, Saturday 26 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 at the level crossings, and flyers distributed at the level crossing.
- **Letters to residents and businesses** – We delivered letters to residents and businesses near the level crossing. This letter contained information about the removals, a link to the online survey, and a freepost 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 Kingdon Street 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.



Kingdon Street 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 Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing, how its removal will impact them, and how we can improve the alternative route via Davis Crescent.

The 7 key themes from the feedback are:

- 1. Our recommended improvements**
- 2. More improvements for Davis Crescent**
- 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: Our recommended improvements

What you said – the wider footpath:

Approximately 27% of respondents (77 out of 285 responses) provided feedback relating to the wider footpath recommended on Davis Crescent.

36 responses supported a wider footpath. This included feedback on the following:

- Support for removing car parking to provide more space for people walking, cycling, and amenity improvements (such as more trees).
- Suggestions for wider footpaths on both sides of Davis Crescent.

41 responses did not support wider footpaths. This included concerns on the following:

- The removal of car parks to widen the footpath will negatively impact local businesses.
- A wider footpath would not compensate for the additional walking distance or time needed to use the alternative route.
- There are already issues with traffic using Davis Crescent, including a lack of car parking, and the removal of car parking to widen the footpath would worsen traffic congestion and reduce access to local businesses.
- There is nothing wrong with the footpath and it does not need to be improved.
- A wider footpath is unrealistic due to the confined space and traffic volumes.

Our response:

We recognise the community support for providing more space for people walking and cycling. We also recognise the challenges of making these improvements without negatively impacting traffic or local businesses as a result of removing car parking.

We are required to remove 2 car parks, including 1 on Davis Crescent near Merv Smith Hobbies and 1 on Short Street outside Quest. These car parks create sightline issues for vehicles exiting near Urbano Interiors and for pedestrians crossing near Lumsden Green. As a result, both car parks are non-compliant and must be removed regardless.

Please refer to Figure 1 below for more detail.

There is a wide range of parking options available in the area and the removal of this car parking will not significantly impact local businesses. More information about parking options is available on page 16.

Works to widen the footpath will begin in March 2024 ahead of the level crossing removal later in mid-2024.



Figure 1: Auckland Transport will remove 2 car parks to remedy non-compliant sightline issues.





Theme 1: Our recommended improvements

What you said – the raised table:

Approximately 24% of respondents (68 out of 285 responses) provided feedback relating to the raised pedestrian table we recommended on the corner of Short Street and Davis Crescent.

35 responses supported a raised table. This included feedback on the following:

- The raised table needs to be designed as a zebra crossing to ensure vehicles stop and give way to pedestrians, rather than just slowing down without giving way.
- There is a lot of traffic using Davis Crescent as a short-cut to Carlon Gore Road or Parnell Road, and more speed tables are needed to discourage this and slow traffic down.
- Some feedback supported a raised table but had concerns about the height and slope of the raised table for people on bikes.
- Relocate the raised table to Kingdon Street near the University of Auckland Newmarket Campus.

33 responses did not support a raised table. This included concerns on the following:

- A raised table would not compensate for the additional walking distance or time needed to use the alternative route.
- A raised table would worsen traffic congestion in the area.
- A raised table would not improve safety at all.

Our response:

We recognise the community support for better traffic calming on Davis Crescent, including more raised tables on Davis Crescent, to improve safety for people walking and cycling.

In response to community feedback, we will:

- Ensure the raised crossing is designed as a zebra crossing, requiring vehicles to give way to pedestrians.
- Lower the height of the raised table to provide easier movement for everyone, including people on bikes, pedestrians, and drivers.

The raised table will be installed on the corner of Davis Crescent and Short Street. We are unable to install additional raised tables within the project budget.

We recognise the concerns related to increased traffic congestion as a result of the raised table. However, drivers should already be mindful of the corner, people crossing at the existing crossing, and slowing down regardless. Therefore, the installation of a raised table will not significantly affect congestion or current traffic flows. Pedestrian safety must be prioritised.

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



Theme 2: More improvements for Davis Crescent

What you said:

Approximately 13% of feedback (37 out of 285 responses) told us that more improvements need to be made on Davis Crescent.

This feedback generally supported our recommended improvements but told us that additional improvements are needed to improve walking and cycling in the wider area.

This feedback suggested the following additional improvements:

- More direct and wider footpaths through Lumsden Green to better separate foot traffic and bikes from people seated at restaurants.
- A raised pedestrian crossing between 27 Davis Crescent and Carlton Gore Road.
- More trees and plantings on Davis Crescent.
- Change Davis Crescent to a one-way street.
- Reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety near the Khyber Pass Road / Kingdon Street intersection.
- Install safe cycle lanes over the Davis Crescent overbridge.
- Wayfinding for the alternative route near Kingdon Street.
- Remove more car parking to provide greater space for people walking and cycling.

Our response:

We have carefully assessed these improvements suggested by the community and recognise the support to make further improvements.

In response to community feedback, we will install new signage in the area to improve wayfinding along the alternative route and to local destinations.

However, we are unable to make further improvements as suggested by the community because some suggestions are outside the scope of our project, while others are more significant changes that will require more funding than currently available.

The improvements we will install, including the wider footpath and raised pedestrian crossing, will provide an affordable solution for improving the safety of the alternative route while acknowledging the concerns raised by some feedback. These improvements balance all feedback received and remains within the allocated budget.



Theme 3: Safety of the level crossing

What you said:

Approximately 35% of feedback (99 out of 285 responses) related to the safety of Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing.

71 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.
- Davis Crescent is congested with too much vehicle traffic.
- There is more likely to be an accident between a pedestrian and car on Davis Crescent.

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.

21 responses suggested that, if Auckland Transport is concerned about the safety of the level crossing, improvements ought to be made to the level crossing itself as opposed to the alternative route.

7 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 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 are recorded 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 18% of feedback (52 out of 285 responses) suggested we build a bridge or underpass to improve safety while retaining a connection at this location. This included some feedback which suggested building a bridge in an alternative location closer to the University of Auckland Newmarket Campus.

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 priority of each level crossing.

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

However, initial assessments completed during the Business Case stage indicated that the availability of an alternative route very close-by meant that, in the current financial circumstances, an overbridge or underpass is not a priority at Kingdon Street relative to other level crossings across the network.

Our initial assessments also showed that, due to the confined space, construction of a bridge in the same location would require one of the following:

- A. A bridge with ramps. Due to the accessibility requirements of the ramp gradients, and the height required to clear the overhead wires, this bridge would involve similar walking distances to using the existing Davis Crescent overbridge.
- B. A bridge with lifts and stairs. This bridge would be significantly more expensive to construct and involve ongoing maintenance costs. AT does not have funding for these costs.



Theme 5: Timing of the removal and improvements

What you said:

Approximately 5% of feedback (16 out of 285 responses) related to the timing of the removals or improvements.

6 responses told us that removing the level crossing as soon as possible is important to prevent a potential death within the community. This included 2 responses from individuals who have previously witnessed near misses and described the emotional impacts of this.

10 responses told us that improvements to the alternative route must be made before removing the level crossing.

Our response:

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

More detail about these improvements is provided on pages 7, 8, and 9.

Theme 6: Support for the removal

What you said:

Approximately 7% of feedback (21 out of 285 responses) expressed their support for removing Kingdon Street 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 Newmarket 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 also expressed that an overbridge is unnecessary with Davis Crescent being so close, provided that safety on Davis Crescent 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 68% of feedback (193 out of 285 responses) was opposed to the removal or expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts of the removal.

This included substantial feedback from the Newmarket Business Association outlining:

- Opposition to the removal
- The potential impacts on local residents and businesses
- The outcomes of their community petition to retain the level crossing
- Suggestions for other solutions, including an overbridge or reinstating the temporary Newmarket West Train Station (see page 19 for our response).

The potential impacts described by the community are outlined below.

- **Walking distances and time**

Using Davis Crescent as an alternative route will increase walking distances and travel times, causing inconvenience to people walking and cycling around Newmarket. The inconvenience is made worse in poor weather conditions and at night.

- **Travel choice**

Removing the level crossing would result in fewer people walking, cycling and using public transport, and more people driving, due to the added distances and inconvenience of using Davis Crescent. The effects of this would increase safety risks, traffic congestion and impact local businesses.

- **Car parking and buses on Khyber Pass Road**

The level crossing is an important link and safe route for office workers to access car parks and bus stops on Khyber Pass Road, including the Old Brewery Car Park and bus stops near the BP petrol station.

- **Impacts on local business:**

Removing the level crossing would negatively impact local businesses on Kingdon Street, affecting store revenues, property values, and rental yields as a result of reduced access. The removal of car parking to widen the footpath on Davis Crescent will also reduce access to local businesses. This will accumulatively reduce the viability of retail on Kingdon Street and increase store vacancies.



- **Urban development and growth**

Increasing urban development and population growth in the area, including both commercial and residential development, will require walking and cycling infrastructure to support access for new residents and workers.

There is a large residential development at 10-12 Kingdon Street and people have invested in this development based on the understanding that there will be connectivity between the two sides of Kingdon Street.

Increasing growth in the area means the level crossing is likely to be used more regularly, providing good justification to retain the level crossing.

- **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.

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:

- **Walking distances and time**

We understand 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 Davis Crescent will not add significant distance for most people walking or cycling (approximately 3-5 minutes). Feedback from the community also told us that using the alternative route will not take long.



- Travel choice**

Based on community feedback, we will make improvements to the alternative route before we remove the level crossing. These improvements will help support people to continue walking and cycling after the level crossing is removed. More detail is provided on pages 7, 8, and 9.

- Car parking and buses on Khyber Pass Road**

There is a range of parking options within similar walking distances:

Facility	Approximate distance from 123 Carlton Gore Road
Old Brewery Car Park	350m (via Kingdon Street) 500m (via Davis Crescent)
2-4 York Street	330m (via Kingdon Street) 460m (via Davis Crescent)
11-15 Railway Street	400m
80 on Broadway	330m
81 Carlton Gore Road	290m
17 Kingdon Street	70m
14 Kingdon Street	80m

We understand that some people may prefer to use a specific parking facility. In this case, using Davis Crescent will not add significant distance for most people (approximately 3-5 minutes). Feedback from the community also told us that using the alternative route will not take long.

For buses, the bus stop near 125 Broadway is closer to 123 Carlton Gore Road regardless of the removal. Access to buses is therefore unaffected in terms of distance but will be made easier with improvements to Davis Crescent.

Bus stop ID	Walking distance
7177 (Bus stop near BP)	400m (via Kingdon Street)
7201 (Bus stop near Timezone)	360m (via Davis Crescent)

- Local business**

Over time we have observed several risks across the rail network such as school children climbing over the safety gates while they are closed, prams becoming stuck in the tracks, and distracted people with headphones crossing in front of oncoming trains.

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.

There are also more local businesses that will benefit from the additional foot traffic using Davis Crescent than businesses on Kingdon Street. This includes some businesses on Carlton Gore Road, Short Street, Davis Crescent and near Lumsden Green.

- **Urban development and growth**

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

- **Community segregation**

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

However, initial assessments completed during the Business Case stage indicated the availability of an alternative route meant that, in the current financial circumstances, an overbridge or underpass is not a priority for this location relative to other level crossings across the network.

We encourage you to read more information about a bridge or underpass on page 12.



Other areas of interest

During our community engagement, we also heard about several other topics that were less common or outside of our scope, but are just as important to our analysis and decision making.

Buses on Carlton Gore Road

Some feedback suggested relocating bus routes to Carlton Gore Road to mitigate the added walking distances to bus stops caused by the removal of Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing.

Our response:

Relocating bus routes to Carlton Gore Road is not possible because some parts of this route are not suitable for buses, including corners near the Broadway / Davis Crescent roundabout. The absence of bus lanes (like on Khyber Pass Road) would also impact travel times and reliability as buses get stuck in general traffic.

The bus stop near 125 Broadway is also closer to 123 Carlton Gore Road regardless of the removal. Access to buses is therefore unaffected in terms of distance but will be made easier with improvements to Davis Crescent.

Bus stop ID	Walking distance
7177 (near BP)	400m (via Kingdon Street)
7201 (near Timezone)	360m (via Davis Crescent)

Enabling increased rail frequency

Some feedback told us that they do not understand how removing the Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing will enable AT to increase rail frequency. This feedback explained that pedestrians need to wait for trains, as opposed to the trains waiting for pedestrians, and rail frequency is therefore not limited by pedestrians who use the level crossing.

Our response:

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 faced by AT, including at level crossings.

These safety regulations require AT to reduce the risk of serious injury or death before we introduce more frequent trains after CRL opens to the public. We must comply with these regulations in order to receive approval from Waka Kotahi for increasing rail frequency.

Reinstating Newmarket West Train Station

Feedback from the Newmarket Business Association suggested reinstating the temporary train station that was installed during upgrades to Newmarket Station. This temporary train station was named Newmarket West Station.

The feedback told us that the removal of Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing is undesirable in circumstances where reinstating Newmarket West Station is possible. Reinstating this train station would meet AT's requirements for removing level crossings while providing wider economic and connectivity benefits for Newmarket.

Our response:

We acknowledge the importance of Newmarket West Station and Newmarket South Station that were temporarily installed during construction of upgrades to Newmarket Station in 2010.

Given that Newmarket Station is optimally located in the centre of Newmarket, the two temporary train stations (South and West) were essential to ensure a continuation of train services and easy access to the trains for all areas of Newmarket. Having two temporary stations meant that people did not need to walk long distances to either end of Newmarket while Newmarket Station was closed for upgrades.

Reinstating Newmarket West Station is not possible for the following reasons:

1. It is unnecessary due to the close proximity of Newmarket Station and Grafton Station less than 10 minutes' walk from Kingdon Street (approximately 700 – 800m). Our Rapid Transit Station Study used an evidence-based approach to determine that this is a short and walkable distance for people.
2. Impacts on rail operations and travel times, including the time needed for trains to stop at the station, and the knock-on impacts caused by these stoppages (such as train timetabling).
3. Significant construction and operational costs. AT does not have funding available for these costs due to the current budget shortfall. More information about funding is available on page 12.
4. Auckland Transport has already endorsed the Regional Rapid Transport Plan 2023-2031 (RPTP), which outlines the future plans for rail services after the CRL is open. There was extensive public consultation on this plan through 2023.

Kingdon Street road level crossing

Feedback from some property owners told us that AT previously agreed to retain a pedestrian level crossing at Kingdon Street following the removal of Newmarket West Train Station, instead of reinstating the original vehicle level crossing which existed prior to 2008. Feedback told us that the current removal of Kingdon Street pedestrian level crossing is contrary to this prior agreement.

Our response:

AT acknowledges the previous decisions related to removing the Kingdon Street road level crossing. However, we must consider these decisions in context.

Decisions related to the Newmarket Station upgrade and the Kingdon Street road level crossing predates the CRL, and we have since worked collaboratively with Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail on making further upgrades across the rail network. These upgrades will significantly increase the number of passenger and freight trains across the entire network.

The increased rail frequencies mean that we are required to remove some pedestrian level crossings before the CRL opens to the public, and we do acknowledge that this may be contrary to previous decisions regarding Kingdon Street.

However, priorities for our transport network change overtime. Maintaining the status quo at Kingdon Street based on decisions or agreements of the past is regressive and does not benefit Aucklanders.