

28 April 2023

Patrick Dunford
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REF: OIA-12321

Dear Patrick

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 28 March 2023 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Concerning the report produced by WSP titled "SH1B Telephone Road/Holland Road Intersection and Rail Crossing" dated 3 March 2023

My enquiry is to ascertain why the report completely ruled out and did not further investigate the option for the road to be lowered to create a grade separated crossing by passing underneath the railway line at Telephone Road.

There is only in the report a single line entry titled "bridge or tunnel" which claims "not appropriate for context" and the option itself was claimed to fail both Kiwirail safety criteria when it would have passed both of them and therefore should have made it through to the shortlist of options to be further investigated.

I am unclear what the meaning of "not appropriate for context" claim is given there are numerous similar underpasses in rural areas all along the East Coast main trunk railway.

No specific investigation was undertaken for grade separation of the road, while maintaining rail on its current alignment. This option would be considerably more expensive than the other preferred options.

In addition, this option was not considered feasible due to the ground and groundwater conditions in the area, and the construction requirements of building a tunnel under live rail tracks. Hence this option was not progressed in the multi-criteria analysis (MCA).

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, KiwiRail and the Waikato District Council all agree that there are viable and safe options for reopening the rail crossing. These options all involve rebuilding the crossing and the adjacent intersection, as the low-cost options put forward do not meet safety requirements.

While there are viable and safe options for reopening the rail crossing, there is no funding available in the current funding cycle (the 2021-24 National Land Transport Programme); however, Waka Kotahi

will apply for funding in the 2024-27 funding cycle. This means that for the foreseeable future, the rail crossing will remain closed to traffic.

While the crossing will remain closed for vehicles, Waka Kotahi is planning to build a pedestrian/cyclist crossing over the railway line, with a school bus stop on the Holland Road side, subject to final approval from KiwiRail.

I acknowledge the impact this has had and will continue to have on the lives of some residents who live on or near Telephone Road.

For more information about the investigation carried out, the full report can be accessed on the Waka Kotahi website at: www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1b-telephone-road-rail-crossing.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact us by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz

Yours sincerely



David Speirs
Director Regional Relationships (Waikato / Bay of Plenty)