

26 March 2024

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Kia ora J Turner

The information you requested – CAS-871668-H1C7W7

Thank you for your request for information dated 5 March 2024 about our connected communities programme.

“I am writing to request information in two parts about the "connected communities" programme:

- Total expenditure on the programme from initiation to closure in 22/23
- Plans to implement any of the findings of the programme, particularly on New North Road which saw extensive community consultation.
- If not covered in the above, any plans to implement T2/Bus lanes along the stretches of New North Road where they do not currently exist.”

Connected Communities Programme

The Connected Communities programme was established in 2019 with the intention of optimising 12 key transport corridors across the region with a focus on getting the most out of the existing infrastructure and developing solutions with local boards and the community.

The programme commenced in the financial year (FY) 2020 to investigate upgrading corridors for bus priority, safety and cycling and to connect to supporting cycling networks.

Covid 19 impacts on Programme

As the programme was about to commence community engagement in March 2020, Covid 19 and its associated lockdowns brought significant changes to the delivery of the programme.

To deliver on contractual arrangements technical emerging options were developed for each of the corridor workstreams and then the commercial contracts were put on hold until the outcome of Covid 19 could be clarified on the programme.

The Auckland Council emergency budget in July 2020 (FY 2021) significantly altered the funding and resources available for the programme. Work was recommenced on two corridors Great North Road, New North Road and investigations into dynamic bus lanes and cycle lanes.

Progress on the programme continued to be interrupted by Covid 19 lockdowns which significantly impacted on community engagement. This resulted in significant delays and reductions in appropriate resources for the programme. In the FY 2022 the Council budget

was further constrained and progress on New North Road, Great North Rd and cycling links were the only projects to continue.

The Mayoral Letter of Expectation and Auckland Council financial budgetary constraints in 2022

In 2022 the Great North Road upgrade was identified for construction (\$28.1m for 1.6km of corridor) and the New North Road corridor business case had identified a preferred option (\$140M for 11.8km of corridor).

With the continued significant financial constraints on Auckland Transport's budget, the new Mayoral letter of expectation 2022 and the Statement of Intent in early 2023, it was confirmed to the Board in May 2023 that the organisation could not afford a transformational corridor programme at this time.

Continued use and development of Connected Communities programme workstreams

Auckland Transport continue to use many of the successful outputs developed within the programme including:

- Community Collaboration Panels assisting in developing technical designs and incorporating Local Board representation.
- Network approach for corridor improvements incorporating safety, bus priority and cycle outcome.
- Business cases for major Auckland arterial corridors
- Kerb to kerb solution development to reduce costs and community and business disruption.
- Dynamic bus and cycle lane option research and trials
- Organisational wide matrix teams and programme management frameworks

The data and outcomes from the programme are continuing to be utilised across Auckland Transport including:

- Construction of the Great North Road upgrade
- Corridor sections incorporated into the Kianga Ora brownfield development street upgrades programme.
- Northwest busway designs for the Central City area incorporating Vincent St
- Connecting development stages for Auckland Council Te Ha Noa Victoria St cycle lanes
- Development of dynamic bus lanes delivery
- Delivery of optimisation programme initiatives
- Delivery of priorities for bus priority, walking, safety and cycling programmes
- Delivery of priorities for AT 10-year funding plans
- Prioritization of corridor upgrades

In terms of the New North Road corridor a number of transport optimisation projects have been completed within the timeframe of the programme including:

- Intersection improvements at Woodward Road
- Clearway amendments along the corridor
- Additional signalised pedestrian crossing at Morningside train station
- Pedestrian safety improvements at the Sandringham Road intersection

- Road and vehicle priority changes for buses including traffic signalisation in close proximity to Mt Eden Train Station.

Further investigation are being undertaken on:

- Optimising the New North Road corridor in terms of clearway, special vehicle lanes including bus lanes and traffic signal changes.
- Following the bus routes commencing in Rosebank, work is currently being progressed to confirm priority measures for buses along Rosebank, Avondale and Blockhouse Bay Road that feed into New North Road.

The Mayoral Letter of Expectation for Auckland Transport and Auckland Council financial budgetary constraints in 2024

Auckland Transport are working to determine the best way forward that will enable us to deliver solutions quickly within our funding parameters and prioritise improvements across Auckland key arterial road corridors including New North Road corridor. This is being incorporated into the Joint Transport Plan for Auckland and forms part of the 2024 Draft Regional Land Transport Plan.

Timing of the delivery of these initiatives will be funding dependant in line with the Council’s allocation identified in the draft Long Term Council Plan which is currently undergoing public consultation. Currently the corridor upgrade of New North Road is sitting below the line in terms of priority for the draft Long Term Council Plan and budget.

There remains a significant need to develop viable solutions that optimise Auckland Transport corridors, ensure they most effectively meet the needs of our current and future customers across all modes and that align with Auckland Transport’s Mayoral Letter of Expectations and Statement of Intent for the next three years.

As requested, please also find below a cost breakdown of the spend each year for the on Connected Communities/Integrated Corridors.

Financial Year	2018 / 2019	2019/2020	2020 /2021	2021/ 2022	2022 / 2023
Investment \$m	1.8	16.4	4.1	7.5	2.7

Should you believe that we have not dealt with your request appropriately, you are able to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman in accordance with section 27(3) of the LGOIMA Act and seek an investigation and review in regard to this matter.

Ngā mihi,



Phil Wratt
Engagement Manager
Customer Care