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## Great North Road – Connected Communities Update

For decision:  For noting:

### Ngā tūtohunga / Recommendations

That the the Auckland Transport Board (board):

- a) Acknowledges the feedback received from Auckland Council (Council) Transport and Infrastructure Committee (TIC) members outlining support for the full Great North Road – Connected Communities scheme or implementation of a reduced scope along with suggestions for delivery.
- b) Acknowledges that the \$28.1m full scheme design (exclusive of \$3.3m Council funded storm water separation) has received \$12.5m Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) funding approval.
- c) Notes a Stage 1 of the potential full scheme has been identified to be installed for a three-year trial period, which would require capital funding up to \$19.4m (exclusive of \$3.3m Council funded storm water separation) that provides enhanced amenity and safety for bus users, pedestrians and cyclists compared to a do-nothing or any other considered lower cost option. This can be monitored and evaluated over a three-year trial period prior to completion of the full scheme as Stage 2 as capital funding becomes available. Safety monitoring and potential remedial safety improvements during the three-year monitoring period may be required and would need to be funded from the capital Safety Programme.
- d) Notes that the investment for this scheme will need to be spread across two financial years, and that budget is unlikely to be available for this scheme in the draft 2023/24 Capital Budget.
- e) Endorses the full scope option if sufficient funding becomes available. Where funding is unavailable for the full scheme, the preferred Stage 1 option is endorsed where funding is confirmed to this level. Subject to funding availability, delegation is provided to the Chief Executive to execute works contracts.

### Te whakarāpopototanga matua / Executive summary

1. The project is part of the Urban Cycleways Programme (UCP) and Connected Communities Programme. The project aims to deliver a multi-modal approach that includes pedestrian crossings, bus lanes, bus stops, drainage, streetscape and safety improvements. An overall UCP budget and delegation to the Chief Executive to progress the UCP projects was approved by the board in July 2021 and construction for Great North Road upgrade was approved in October 2021. A full scheme has been consulted on with an estimated cost of \$28.1m (exclusive of \$3.3m Council funded storm water separation).

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2. The project has a high political profile which has divided opinions. A simple majority (4:3) is in favour of the full scheme at Waitematā Local Board. Over 60 letters have been received in support of the three Inner West transport corridor schemes of which this project is one (and around 5 in opposition). Five members of the TIC attended a site visit in April 2023. Feedback has been received from TIC members (Attachment 1). Feedback is either in favour of the proposed scheme or requests AT to look for additional cost savings and provided suggestions where the design could be modified. The project team has therefore reviewed design options and costs.
3. The scheme is due for delivery in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to align with Council sewer separation work and an enabling contract (value \$5.85m) was awarded in 2022 to undertake site investigations and sewer separation work. This contract is currently on hold pending the board decision and will cost approximately \$1m for cancellation if work is halted. Timing considerations are therefore important for delivery.
4. The extent of capital funding constraints for the next four years is now clearer, with emerging capital constraints over the next four financial years making delivery of the full scheme during this period uncertain.
5. The recommendation is to proceed with Stage 1 of a lower cost option of bus and cycle infrastructure improvements in the event of funding unavailability for the full scheme, subject to available funding for this Stage 1. This option represents approximately a \$9m saving when compared with the full scheme design. Assuming 51% Funding Assistance Rate (FAR) from Waka Kotahi, this option would cost Council \$9.5m. This option will require some operational budget for monitoring of road user behaviour and potential capital spend from the safety programme if remediation is required. A summary of the monitoring procedure and Safe Systems Assessment of the Stage 1 Scheme is included in Attachment 3 – noting the preferred descoped scheme is the Stage 1 Scheme with vertical deflection and nine side road treatments. Depending on the outcome of the monitoring, additional safety improvements may be required at a later date where the benefit cost justified the intervention, which would need to be delivered through the Safety Programme. Stage 2 to complete the full scheme could be implemented later subject to funding.
6. The staged option provides enhanced amenity and safety for bus users, pedestrians and cyclists compared to a do-nothing option or any other lower cost option assessed and is approved for co-funding by Waka Kotahi.

## Ngā tuhinga ō mua / Previous deliberations

Date	Report Title	Key Outcomes
28 October 2021 Board	Great North Road (Newton) Upgrade	The board approved the Great North Road (Newton) upgrade for construction in October 2021 and delegations to the chief executive to approve construction activities.
December 2022 and February 2023 Board	Inner Corridor West Projects	Workshops for board members for familiarisation with the history of each project and key issues followed by site visit.

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Date	Report Title	Key Outcomes
28 February 2023 Board	Inner West Corridor Projects	It was agreed that the Great North Road project be referred for feedback from the TIC.
16 May 2023 Design and Delivery Committee (committee)	Great North Road – Connected Communities Update	Further assessment against budget availability through the 2023/24 annual plan and forward programme. Confirm Waka Kotahi co-share funding.
13 June 2023 Committee	Great North Road – Connected Communities Update	The committee confirmed its support for Waka Kotahi co-share funding for the Stage 1 option if selected. It also supported consideration for inclusion in the 2023/24 annual plan and programme and subject to prioritisation of UCP projects if sufficient budget is available.

## Te horopaki me te tīaroaro rautaki / Context and strategic alignment

7. The scheme includes pedestrian crossings and cycle lanes, together with a 30% increase in length of bus lanes and relocation of bus stops to improve public transport performance. The project brings the road up to modern safety standards to contribute towards Vision Zero. Encouraging more people to walk, cycle and use public transport is a key component of the Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway (TERP). The corridor is well served by high frequency public transport. A ‘walking bus’ serves around 300 pupils at Newton Primary school. Land-use is being intensified in Great North Road with more residential and office space recently constructed and planned. The City Rail Link (CRL) station at Karangahape will open from 2025. There is community aspiration for a ‘tree-lined boulevard’ linking to Karangahape Road.
8. The project was previously approved by the board and was fully funded in the current capital budget, but this is currently part of the ongoing review and reprioritisation of capital in response to the flood recovery programme, programme-wide inflation and resultant budget constraints. These are focused on the next four financial years as part of AT’s 2023/24 Capital Budget and the Joint Transport Plan.
9. A net loss of up to 125 car park spaces along Great North Road remains a concern for some local businesses and the design team is working with the Grey Lynn Business Association and Residents Association to agree satisfactory arrangements. The loss of some parking is inevitable because of unsafe sightlines at some junctions and issues with car transporter loading in the carriageway.
10. The area already has some of the highest levels of walking and cycling in Auckland and is within 3km of the CBD.

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Mode of travel to Education (2018 Census)	Grey Lynn East	Karangahape	Auckland Region
Walk	36%	56.4%	21%
Cycle	3.6%	3.0%	1.5%
<b>Mode of travel to work</b>			
Walk	21.6%	35.7%	4.3%
Cycle	4.1%	2.3%	1.0%

## Ngā matapakinga me ngā tātaritanga / Discussion and analysis

- Extensive consultation has been completed over a period of time regarding the Great North Road corridor improvement full scheme design. Most recently feedback was sought from the TIC. In summary the feedback from TIC members was generally supportive of the scheme proceeding. A number of submissions requested AT to look for additional cost savings and provided suggestions where the design could be modified. Details of the TIC member feedback is included in Attachment 1.
- In response to the feedback received and noting that capital funding constraints are now clearer over the next two years, AT developed two lower cost options in addition to the original design. The lowest cost option (\$8.9m) completely removes the separated cycleway and only provides for cycling within an extended bus lane. This option would not attract Waka Kotahi funding and is not recommended. Other options assessed included use of the footpath and creation of a shared path, however, this is not considered appropriate due to the lack of achievable straight line pathways that could be achieved without tree removal, narrowing of the footpath at points along Great North Road, interface challenges with side street intersections and private building access points.
- The preferred low-cost option (\$19.4m) – Attachment 2 and 3 (Stage 1 of the full scheme with vertical deflection and side road treatments) includes a separated cycleway and nine raised intersection side road treatments recommended by the safe systems assessment. This option represents a \$8.7m savings when compared with the full scheme design (\$28.1m). Waka Kotahi funding for this option is confirmed. This option will provide a higher level of cyclist and pedestrian safety than the existing situation but requires a departure from current cycle standards (see Attachment 2 and 3). It is proposed that this staged option is progressed, subject to available capital funding, rather than retain the status quo, to achieve short-term amenity and safety improvements while monitoring impacts on cycle safety and travel behaviour. Dependant on the outcome of the monitoring, additional safety improvements could be progressed at a later date where the benefit cost justified the intervention, subject to funding prioritisation within the Safety Programme and the wider capital programme. A later Stage 2 may be implemented, subject to available funding, to complete the full scheme.

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14. The main trade-offs associated with the Stage 1 of the full scheme compared to the full scheme being implemented at once, are fewer pedestrian facilities, fewer street trees, closer interface between cyclist and bus passengers at bus stops, reduction of sightlines at side road entrances to the absolute minimum, no road resurfacing and leaving 14 side road intersections without alteration. All represent departures from the Technical Design Manual standard, but with net safety improvements over the do-nothing and alternative lower cost options assessed. Appendices 2 and 3 consider options for implementation.
15. The Great North Road is a strategic bus and cycling route. The north-western cycleway is the busiest route in Auckland carrying over 1000 cycles every day throughout the year, while Karangahape Road is a linking route that already attracts over 500 cycle trips per day. The intensification of land-use and connection to the Karangahape CRL station will increase active travel in the Great North Road area. The corridor is categorised as medium/high road safety risk due to frequency of collisions at intersections although there have been no fatalities and few serious injuries in the last five years.
16. Great North Road will attract Waka Kotahi central government share of 51%. This funding may be at risk if works are not substantially complete when the UCP ends in 2024.
17. Lower-cost options were previously rejected during public consultations so there may be a reputational risk and lack of stakeholder support. The intended safety outcomes to reduce deaths and serious injuries will need to be monitored following the implementation with further interventions possibly needed. While the Stage 1 option provides amenity and safety improvements over the status quo and other low-cost options, compared to the full scheme bus use, walking and cycling uptake will not achieve the outcomes from the full scheme, especially if other elements of the Inner west network are not built. The full scheme could be completed later, subject to funding, as a Stage 2.

## Ngā tūraru matua / Key risks and mitigations

Key risk	Mitigation
Project Cost Inflation	Funding is requested for the P95 estimate which includes 15% contingency. Going to market as soon as practicable will lock-in a delivery price
Public perception of reduced safety of Stage 1 scheme – trading of safety for capital cost Removal of safety elements as part of a trial into a 3 year monitoring framework could have negative perception of vision zero approach	Delivery of full scheme Delivery of staged scheme with allocated budget to provide a rapid delivery response if monitoring framework identifies the need for change
Loss of ‘dig-once’ window of opportunity with Council Healthy Waters upgrade if upgrade not progresses	Timely decision in June 2023

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Key risk	Mitigation
Loss of Waka Kotahi co-funding if scheme not progressed in 2023-24	<p>Project to start construction in late 2023</p> <p>Waka Kotahi support the staged option for 2023-24 construction</p> <p>AT would need to apply for alternative funding if delivery is deferred</p>

## Ngā ritenga-ā-pūtea me ngā rauemi / Financial and resource impacts

18. The total cost reflects the full scope of road corridor changes (bus lanes, cycle tracks, pedestrian crossings, changes to major junctions, resurfacing, street trees and side road entry treatments) and includes contingency of 15%. The elemental costs broadly benchmark with similar full road corridor and intersection changes along major roads, both in New Zealand and internationally. Costs in the table below exclude the storm water separation and renewals works and BCR calculation is based on P50 cost.

Scheme Location	BCR	Estimated P50 Cost \$m	Estimated P95 Cost \$m
<b>Great North Road (from Crummer Road to Karangahape Road) – approved scheme</b>	2.4	28.1	32.3
<b>Stage 1 scheme – with Stage 2 \$10m of engineering safety and pedestrian upgrades deferred by 3 years subject to monitoring and evaluation framework results – subject to prioritisation and funding</b>	2.0	19.4	22.3

19. The programme funds were included in the current 2022/23 capital budget. The renewals and sewer separation work are also fully funded within this year's capital budget (\*AT and Council). The Waka Kotahi Urban Cycleway fund provides 51% of an approved budget of \$24.5m.

20. The board formally approved the UCP budget in July 2021 (\$139m until June 2024) and gave full delegation authority to the Chief Executive to approve procurement planning and execute remaining construction contracts within the RLTP 2021-24 funding.

21. The investment in the scheme will now need to be spread across two financial years. Budget is unlikely to be available for this scheme in the 2023/24 Capital Budget with further emerging capital constraints in following years.

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## Ngā whaiwhakaaro ō te taiao me te panonitanga o te āhuarangi / Environment and climate change considerations

22. The embedded carbon figures for the original design are 1,727 tonnes of carbon dioxide or equivalent to 780 light passenger vehicles. This is reduced to 461 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e for the Stage 1 scheme. The proposed street trees have a positive impact on the ambience, temperature and air quality along the routes. Reducing surface temperature contributes to the longevity of the road pavement by reducing wear and tear in hot weather, while the planting and tree pits contribute to the sponge effect to help absorb and slow down surface water run-off. The surrounding areas are relatively high-density housing within 3km of the Central Business District..

## Ngā whakaaweawe me ngā whakaaro / Impacts and perspectives

### Mana whenua

23. The project manager has a process in place to continue work with Central Hui iwi during the construction with a current focus around the construction of the service relocation and tree pit construction including liaison with tree nursery.

### Ngā mema pōti / Elected members

24. Workshops were held with Waitemātā Local Board in November 2022 and January 2023. The full scheme was endorsed by 4:3 majority at Waitemātā Local Board in February 2023. Local campaigners have made representations to the Local Board and TIC about the schemes. Feedback was sought and site visit arranged for the TIC (see Attachment 1 for feedback). The Local MP (and other central Auckland MPs) have written in support of the scheme.

### Ngā rōpū kei raro i te Kaunihera / Council Controlled Organisations

25. The project team is working with Watercare to coordinate and deliver storm water separation work.

### Ngā kiritaki / Customers

26. Local people participated in three rounds of public consultation. A Community Liaison Group influenced the designs and engaged local schools and businesses. The Community Liaison Group tell us that they would walk or cycle more but the road does not feel safe enough for them.

27. Changes to car parking and loading arrangements have been discussed with local businesses and residents to agree an acceptable compromise to the point where most are satisfied with the proposals.

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## Ngā whaiwhakaaro haumarū me ngā whaiwhakaaro hauora / Health, safety and wellbeing considerations

28. The road is used for access to several schools and colleges in the area and is close to new CRL station and high frequency bus services. The scheme addresses unsafe car transporter loading activity along the road. Addressing safety and encouraging healthy and sustainable travel is fundamental. The trial method for the staged scheme includes allowance for design alterations if incidents arise.

### Ā muri ake nei / Next steps

29. The next steps are:

- a. Confirm available funding for the full or Stage 1 scheme in the 2023/24 annual plan to be confirmed at the June 2023 board meeting, with reassurance of future year funding for a multi-year contract.
- b. Assuming available prioritised funding, for either the full or Stage 1 schemes, proceed with the awarded enabling works contract and to procurement and construction of the full works in the 2024 financial year.

### Ngā whakapiringa / Attachments

Attachment number	Description
1	Feedback from councillors
2	Scheme description and value optioneering
3	Draft monitoring framework and Safe Systems Assessment for Stage 1 scheme

### Te pou whenua tuinga / Document ownership

<b>Submitted by</b>	Adrian Lord <b>Head of Cycling</b>	
<b>Recommended by</b>	Mark Laing <b>Executive General Manager Finance</b>	
	Mark Lambert <b>Executive General Manager Integrated Networks</b>	
<b>Approved for submission</b>	Dean Kimpton <b>Chief Executive</b>	