

21 October 2015

Glen Ashton  
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Dear Glen,

### **Sealing of Ahuroa Road**

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the relativity of infrastructure spending in the Rodney area. I am responding on the sealing of the unsealed sections of Ahuroa Road between Ahuroa and Puhoi.

Historically, Rodney has had an extensive unsealed road network which reflected the largely rural nature of the area. With the growth in population across the Auckland region, as with the Hauraki Gulf Islands and to a lesser extent Franklin, there has been increasing pressure to seal the unsealed road network to mitigate the increasing traffic volumes and dust nuisance.

The cost of sealing in Rodney is significant. Many of the roads having a high priority are in difficult terrain and many may require land acquisition to ensure that appropriate design standards can be achieved. Whilst, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to relax some of these standards, Auckland Transport has to ensure that in sealing a road, the higher vehicles speeds generated, do not cause a greater safety risk in terms of frequency or severity.

Budgetary constraints are also significant. The benefits accruing from sealing are very localised in nature. Road sealing is not currently of sufficient national priority to attract regional transport funding from government. Equally, within Auckland the seal extension budget is competing for the limited funding made available to Auckland Transport against other projects generating significant regional benefits.

The level of funding for seal extensions identified in Auckland Council's Long Term Plan totals \$10m over the three year period from 2015 to 2018. Whilst this is clearly a significant investment, it falls short of the level needed to make significant progress in sealing the 868km of unsealed roads across Auckland. There is therefore a need to prioritise this investment to ensure that it delivers the maximum benefits to residents.

The prioritisation is undertaken using the criteria contained in the Seal Extension Guidelines.

The criteria considers traffic volume including heavy commercial vehicles, houses and amenities close to the road, safety (traffic accidents) and road gradient (steepness). The highest weighting for prioritisation is given to traffic volume as vehicle movements are the primary cause of dust.

Over the last six months the unsealed road network has been reprioritised to ensure that it reflects any major changes in traffic volumes and residential density. There are five unsealed sections of Ahuroa Road, three of which feature in the top 12 of ranked sealing projects. These are detailed on the attached drawing along with the schedule of the high priority sealing sites.

Currently, work is progressing to complete the sealing of Matakana Valley Road. This is Auckland Transport's highest priority project and will be completed by May 2016. A contract is about to be awarded for the design for sealing the next three highest priority sites:

1. Takatu Road (4.5km)
2. Silver Hill Road (1.8km)
3. Monowai Road (3.9km)

The contract also includes for the physical sealing of Takatu Road. Subject to supplier performance the physical sealing of both Silver Hill Road and Monowai Road will follow. The scope of work includes not only pavement sealing, but also retaining walls, road restraint systems, traffic control (signing, lining, reflective road studs) and drainage. All these roads are in the Rodney Local Board area.

Regrettably, however, it is unlikely that the available budget for sealing will allow any of the unsealed sections of Ahuroa Road to be sealed before the next Local Transport Plan is published in 2018.

Yours sincerely



Andy Finch

**Manager, Strategic Asset Management and Systems**

**Cc** Phelan Pirrie - Rodney; Councillor Penny Webster; Mayor Len Brown; David Warburton (AT); Greg Edmonds (AT); Stephen Town; Dean Kimpton; Greg Sayers - Rodney, Hibiscus & Bays;  
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