

Permanent Traffic and Parking Changes Report

Waitematā Local Board

Mercury Lane, Auckland Central

Proposed Pedestrian Mall for Mercury Lane

Report to Traffic Control Committee

Reporting Officer: Suresh Patel, Network Integration Manager

Date: 16 January 2023	Resolution ID: 17578SOP
Date Resolved: 27 JAN 2023	Internal cost code: C.101833.03.01

A. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Transport Control Committee (TCC):

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Commence the process to declare part of Mercury Lane (between the existing vehicle crossing at #2 Mercury Lane and Karangahape Road), Auckland Central, a pedestrian mall in accordance with section 336 Local Government Act 1974 and a section of Cross Street a shared space; (as shown in **Addendum 1** and **Addendum 2**),
3. Note that Auckland Transport (AT) is required to publicly consult on the proposed declaration using the special consultative procedure under section 83 Local Government Act 2002;
4. Agree that the proposed part of the Mercury Lane pedestrian mall include the prohibition and exemptions as set out in **section C of this report**.
5. Approve the draft Statement of Proposal attached as **Appendix 1** to be used as the statement of proposal required under section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002;
6. Agree that the period for public consultation on the proposed declaration is one month (the statutory minimum).
7. Note that following the consultation period, the TCC will need to decide whether to declare the Mercury Lane area a pedestrian mall as proposed in view of the submissions received.

B. Background

When Karanga-a-Hape Station opens in 2025, it will result in thousands more pedestrians in the area. The City Rail Link (CRL) project is restricted in its remit outside the immediate station entrances and will return the streets outside of their designation to how they were in 2019. The existing environment beyond these entrances is not well suited to such a significant change and concerns have been raised that it will be unsafe, unsuitable and uninviting for users of the station and the neighbourhood. There is a well-supported vision for what the neighbourhood should look and feel like for users and visitors in the area.

This is supported by wider Council strategies including the City Centre Master Plan and Access for Everyone. Currently, four years of construction and the impact of covid have significantly changed traffic behavior in a positive way and there is an opportunity to build on this to create a pedestrian friendly environment and cater for a wider range of transport modes.

The Karanga-a-Hape Station Neighbourhood Network Improvements Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) project aims to take advantage of the current construction closures to enhance the CRL station further by modifying the wider receiving environment through changes to traffic circulation and the repurposing of general traffic lanes for bus priority, cycle lanes and wider footpaths. According to the current CRL timeframes the streets around the station entrances will be reinstated from mid-2023. This gives less than 18 months to discuss and agree on a plan and produce detailed designs to integrate with the CRL plans. This process is already underway with a Single Stage Business Case for the improvements endorsed by the AT project control group in November 2022. This is now with Waka Kotahi for approval.

Because of the common law right to pass and repass on a road there are very few legislative powers available to AT to permanently block off a road that has been constructed to carry motor vehicles. Those being the road stopping process (where the legal status of being a road is completely stripped from a section of land) or creating a pedestrian mall on part of the road.

Under section 336 of the Local Government Act 1974 a council (or AT Auckland) has the power to declare a specified road or part of a specified road to be a pedestrian mall and prohibit vehicles from driving on it.

This process can be used to deliberately convert an area of road into a pedestrian focused space more like a public park or plaza than a road for the movement of vehicles, or to just create a short blockage to prevent through movement of vehicles. This proposal would be the first of those options – creating a specific pedestrian focused space at the entry to the train station.

AT is proposing to use this power to introduce a section of pedestrian mall to prevent motor vehicles from moving through Mercury Lane from north of the existing vehicle crossing at #2 Mercury Lane to Karangahape Road. This Statement of Proposal you are being asked to approve forms part of the special consultative procedure that AT is required to follow under section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.

C. Proposal

AT preferred proposal is to provide of combination of a pedestrian mall and shared space split on Mercury Lane. This approach would allow for vehicles to continue to access the vehicle entrances that open onto the lower section of this block (Karangahape Road to Cross Street) as a shared zone and declare only the upper portion of the block to be a pedestrian mall separated and prohibit motor vehicles from driving on or parking on that section of Mercury Lane. The boundary for the mall is outlined in the purple shaded area on the diagram seen in Addendum 1. There would be a physical obstruction (type to be confirmed i.e. a form of bollard, street furniture etc.) to block vehicles from moving through the pedestrian mall. The rest of the Mercury Lane (from south of Cross Street to Canada Street) would remain open for southbound general traffic as currently although it will be reduced to a single traffic lane with proposed widened footpaths and a bi-directional cycleway on the western side. That change will be consulted on as part of the wider neighbourhood consultation process.

The statement of proposal includes one alternative proposal so that the consultation can elicit feedback on both options.

The alternative option is to create a shared space on Mercury Lane from Karangahape Road to south of the intersection of Cross Street and Mercury Lane. This would allow vehicles and pedestrian to mix in this space, but the shared zone laws would apply so that vehicles would have to give way to pedestrians (but pedestrians cannot unduly block the progress of moving vehicles). This option is attached as Addendum 2.

It is proposed that different users/activities will have different levels of vehicle access to the pedestrian mall part of Mercury Lane. This level of access will respond to user/activity needs and what is safe based on the high volume of pedestrians that will be present once the Karanga-a-Hape Station opens. Frequent vehicle movements would make Mercury Lane less safe for the high number of pedestrians expected in the future. There are different types of access that can be permitted:

- Access through the retractable bollards AND the ability to park on the pedestrian mall
- Access through the retractable bollards with NO ability to park on the pedestrian mall
- NO access through the retractable bollards, but permitted on the southern section of the pedestrianised area
- NO ACCESS

Proposed prohibition

For the pedestrian mall options, it is proposed that the driving, riding or parking of any motor vehicle would be prohibited on the pedestrian mall at all times subject to the following exemptions.

Proposed exemptions

The exemptions for the pedestrian mall would allow:

- Cycles, and wheeled recreational devices will be exempt from the prohibition and may access any part of the pedestrian mall at all times but must give priority to pedestrians.
- Motor vehicles required for construction, maintenance or services work for the road and buildings facing the road would be able to apply to AT for access on a case-by-case basis.
- Emergency vehicles requiring access to Mercury Lane

Funding

Funding for the more extensive Preferred Option proposal is covered by three sources, which in total will provide around \$17.1M made up from:

- A Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) line item CRL Road-side projects for \$7.3M – this is dependent on Waka Kotahi approval of the associated Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) with a decision expected early 2023.
- Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of \$5M for active mode improvements - approved
- City Centre Targeted Rates (CCTR) through Auckland Council of \$4.5M for public realm / place-making improvements plus around \$300,000 for design phase – this has been

approved by the Local Board and a Group Services Agreement is currently being developed up with Auckland Council.

A detailed cost estimate has been independently completed for the Preferred Option for the entire project which, for Design and Implementation, is expected to cost between \$14.6M (P50) - \$17.5M (P95). Auckland Council and Eke Panuku both strongly support the urban realm improvements and with the Group Services Agreement representatives will now become part of the project working group and Project Control Group.

D. Rationale

All reasonably practicable options to achieve the desired outcome of pedestrianizing the Mercury Lane area suitable as a transition space from the roads to the train station have been identified and assessed. A summary of these are set out below:

1. **Do nothing: Retain the current status quo.**
 - This option does not meet the objectives of the SSBC to reduce vehicular movements in and around the station.
 - The current footpath widths are insufficient to cater for the volume of pedestrians forecast to use the Mercury Lane station entrance.
 - For the above reasons, this is not the recommended option.
2. **Declare a section of Mercury Lane area a Pedestrian Mall under section 336 of the Local Government Act 1974 (*Recommended option*)**
 - The priority will be with pedestrians, but this option also enables AT/Auckland Council to control and manage which authorised vehicles can use this part of Mercury Lane.
 - A pedestrian mall is the basis for the development of the current design.
 - Pedestrian safety is not compromised, it is enhanced with this option.
 - The process to declare a road a pedestrian mall is transparent and allows for public input, as it requires the special consultative procedure under section 83 of the LGA 2002 to be used.
 - For the above reasons, this is the recommended option.
3. **Shared space under shared zone powers of the AT Traffic Bylaw 2012 and Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004**
 - Under this option, motor vehicles would not be excluded from any part of Mercury Lane but would be discouraged from using the space by the way it is laid out and the obligation to give way to the many pedestrians that would be using the space.
 - This option would introduce complexity and uncertainty in ensuring compliance with the traffic restrictions in the area given the large number of anticipated pedestrian movements (around 9,000 pedestrians using the Mercury Lane entrance based on 2028 CRL modelling). In a shared zone, pedestrians have priority over vehicles but only while moving and not unduly obstructing vehicles.
 - Being a shared space may encourage and would allow more vehicles into the area, thus heightening safety risk to pedestrians and potential traffic issues.

- There will be a high number of public transport patrons and pedestrians in this area, which are predicted to increase with Auckland's growing population. A pedestrian mall was more desirable for pedestrians than a shared space, as they would have absolute right of way.
- Allowing vehicles to enter this space but requiring them to give way to pedestrians could lead to traffic congestion on surrounding roads as vehicles queue up to enter the space but blocked by pedestrians in turn block other vehicles from other streets.
- This option addresses some aspects of pedestrian safety by encouraging lower speeds in an environment that prioritizes pedestrians. However, this option is less satisfactory for children and visually impaired users.
- This option is considered less preferable to the pedestrian mall option because it does not fully prioritise pedestrians, who would have to share the space with motorised vehicles.

4. **Road stopping under section 342 and Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974.**

- This option would result in the loss of the ability to manage the space under the roading powers.
- The public consultation as part of this process provides transparency. There would be a need to undertake public consultation and a similar approach with pedestrian malls, which would include surveys, explanation and information sent to the Chief Surveyor General to approve. Public notices would need to be published at certain times, with a period of 40 days to allow for public feedback.
- Public objections can create further delays.
- Possible Environment Court action, with stopping not being active for two years after the court decision.
- AT and Auckland Council can decide what authorised vehicles will be allowed through the Mercury Lane.
- This option was not considered preferable over the pedestrian mall, given the intention and focus is on pedestrian priority.

5. **Road stopping under section 116 of the Public Works Act 1981**

- This option would result in the loss of the ability to manage the space under the roading powers.
- This appeared to be less complicated than “Road Stopping” under the Local Government Act 1974 with no public notification requirement and no express right of appeal to the Environment Court, the stopping could be controversial. Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), which approves road stopping on behalf of the Minister of Lands could be resistant and take a long time to approve the stopping.
- This option is considered unsuitable due to public interest with any new changes proposed for part of Mercury Lane and the lack of opportunity for the public to provide input with the process.
- For the above reasons, this is not a feasible option.

The recommended option is to declare the Mercury Lane (from north of the existing vehicle crossing at #2 Mercury Lane and Karangahape Road) area a pedestrian mall in accordance with section 336 of the LGA 1974 (**Option 2**).

Waitematā Local Board

It is intended once the statement of proposal for declaring part Mercury Lane as a pedestrian mall has been adopted, the Waitematā Local Board will be advised directly of the proposal and their views captured in the consultation feedback.

E. Next Steps

Subject to the recommendations in this report being accepted by the TCC, AT staff within the Transport Controls, Consultations, Communications and Marketing teams will proceed to –

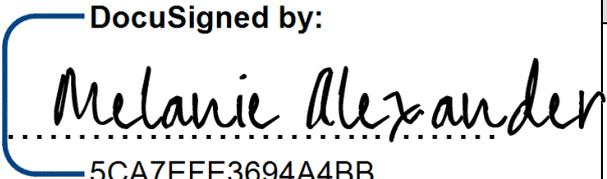
1. Finalise the draft statement of proposal for release to the public for consultation (via direct mailing, Auckland Transport's website, social mediums, local newspapers, liaising with Local Boards and business associations);
2. Provide finalised draft statement of proposal to Auckland Council to distribute through their networks;
3. Collect submissions from the public during the consultation period and answer any questions pertaining to the proposal;
4. Organise special meetings with the TCC as needed for the purpose of hearing submissions from the public in person;

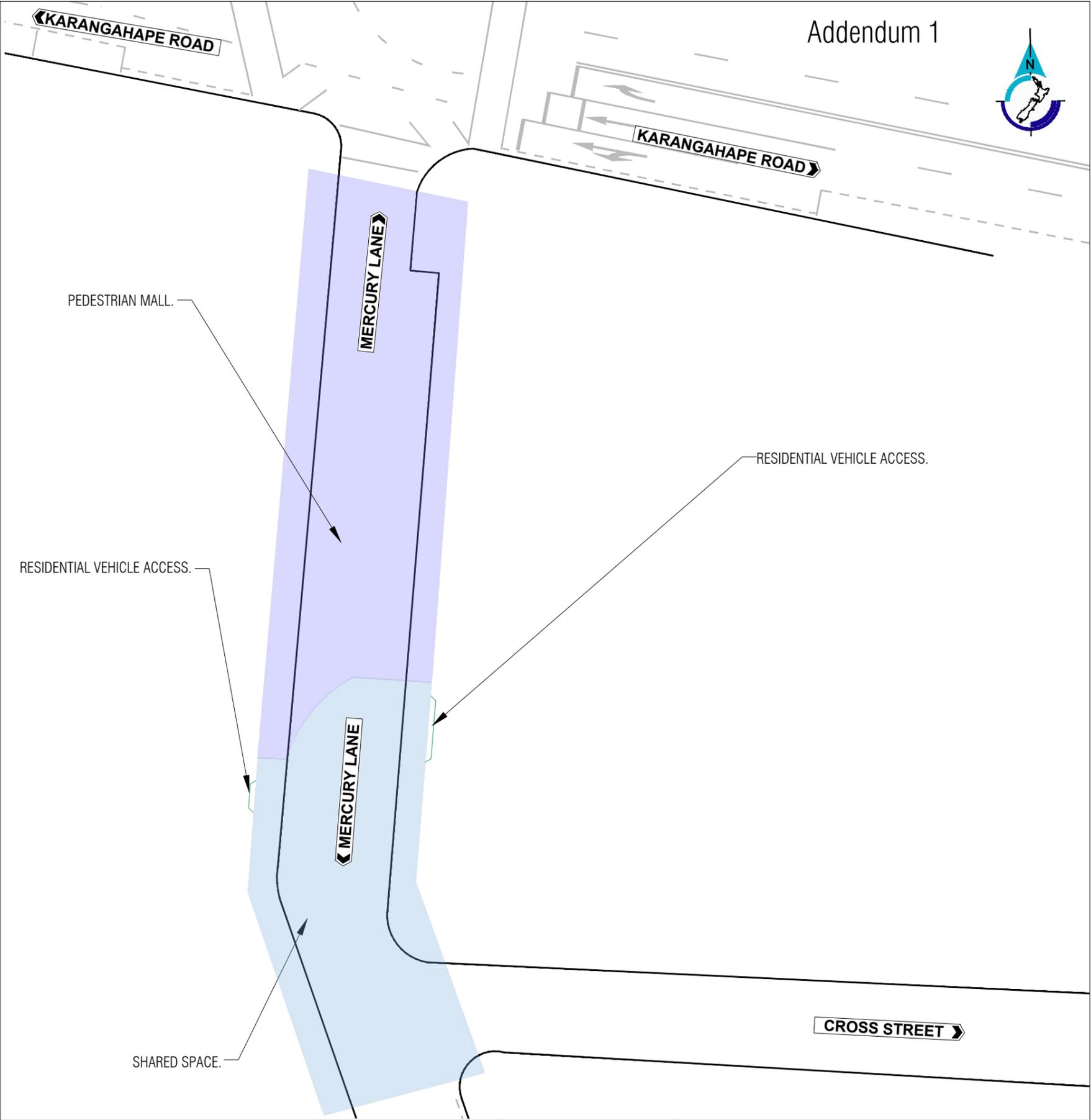
Following closure of the consultation period, collate all submissions and present to the TCC with a recommendation on whether to proceed to declare Mercury Lane a pedestrian mall.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 the recommended "Statement of Proposal"

F. Signatures and Approvals

	Name and title of signatory	Date of Review Approval
Consultant / Author:	Suresh Patel Network Integration Manager Network Integration & Ops Continuity	04/05/2022
Verified by:	Anthony Herath Senior Resolutions Specialist Transport Controls	11/08/2022
Approved by:	Terry Sugrue Transport Controls Team Leader Traffic Operations	12/08/2022
Recommendations Resolved by:	DocuSigned by:  5CA7EFE3694A4BB... Melanie Alexander Chairperson Traffic Control Committee	Date Resolved 27 JAN 2023
Traffic Control Committee		



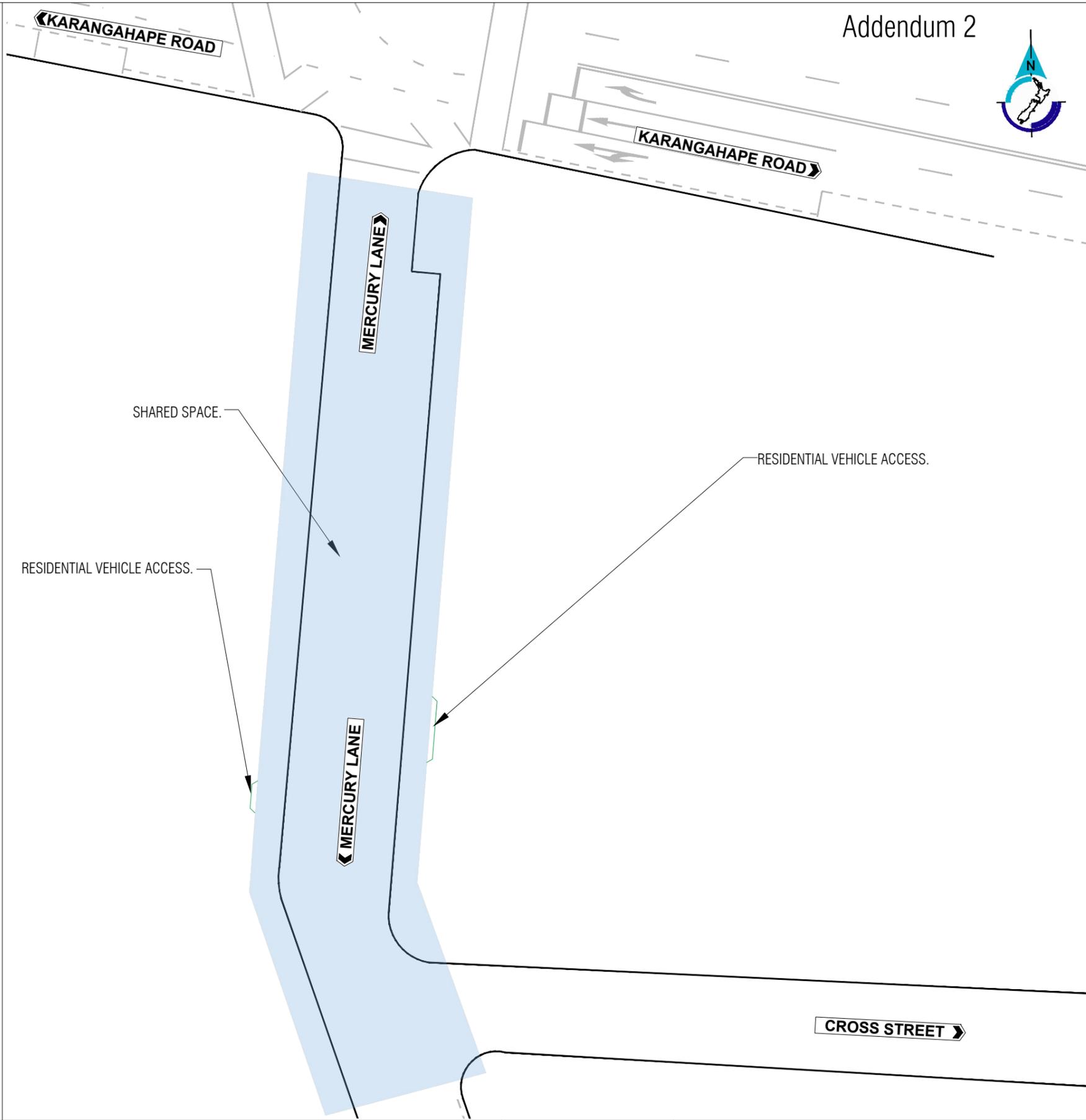
LEGEND

- EXISTING KERB
- EXISTING ROAD MARKINGS
- PEDESTRIAN MALL
- SHARED SPACE
- RESIDENTIAL VEHICLE ACCESS

NOTES

- ALL NEW TRAFFIC AND PARKING SIGNS ARE TO BE INSTALLED AS PER TDM, ATCOP AND/OR RELEVANT LEGISLATION REQUIREMENT.
- ALL NEW TRAFFIC DEVICES ARE TO BE INSTALLED AS PER TDM, ATCOP AND/OR RELEVANT LEGISLATION REQUIREMENT.
- ALL MEASUREMENTS ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 0.5m.
- SIGNS AND MARKINGS ARE INDICATIVE ONLY AND MAY NOT REFLECT FINAL OR EXISTING POSITIONS.

Design:	PTM	Scale:	N.T.S
Survey:	PTM	DWG # :	PTM/WLB/17578SOP/ND/212-174-2
Drawn:	ND-PTM	Rev :	B
Date:	12/01/2023	Sheet#:	Sheet 1 of 1



LEGEND

- EXISTING KERB
- EXISTING ROAD MARKINGS
- SHARED SPACE
- RESIDENTIAL VEHICLE ACCESS

NOTES

- ALL NEW TRAFFIC AND PARKING SIGNS ARE TO BE INSTALLED AS PER TDM, ATCOP AND/OR RELEVANT LEGISLATION REQUIREMENT.
- ALL NEW TRAFFIC DEVICES ARE TO BE INSTALLED AS PER TDM, ATCOP AND/OR RELEVANT LEGISLATION REQUIREMENT.
- ALL MEASUREMENTS ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 0.5m.
- SIGNS AND MARKINGS ARE INDICATIVE ONLY AND MAY NOT REFLECT FINAL OR EXISTING POSITIONS.

Prepared by: For:

PROJECT NAME:
 MERCURY LANE, NEWTON, WAITEMATA LOCAL BOARD.
 RESOLUTION PLAN - PEDESTRIAN MALL/SHARED SPACE.

RESOLUTION ID
17578SOP

Design:	PTM	Scale:	N.T.S
Survey:	PTM	DWG # :	PTM/WLB/17578SOP/ND/212-174-3
Drawn:	ND-PTM	Rev :	B
Date:	12/01/2023	Sheet#:	Sheet 1 of 1

APPENDIX 1

**AUCKLAND TRANSPORT
STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL
MERCURY LANE, AUCKLAND
CITY - PEDESTRIAN MALL
DECLARATION
[MARCH 2022]**

**STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL FOR A PEDESTRIAN MALL
DECLARATION: MERCURY LANE, AUCKLAND CITY**

A. INTRODUCTION

Auckland Transport (AT) proposes to permanently close off or restrict motor vehicle access from the section of Mercury Lane that lies between Cross Street and Karangahape Road (from north of the existing vehicle crossing at #2 Mercury Lane and Karangahape Road) by the way of a Pedestrian Mall.

The process for declaring a section of Mercury Lane to be a pedestrian mall must follow the requirements of section 336 of the Local Government Act 1974. AT is seeking the views of the public on this proposal. This Statement of Proposal sets out the background to the proposal, details of and reasons for the proposal, how the public can view and obtain copies of documents relevant to the proposal, and how submissions on the proposal can be made.

B. BACKGROUND

When Karanga- a-Hape Station opens in 2025, it will result in thousands more pedestrians in the area. The City Rail Link (CRL) project is restricted in its remit outside the immediate station entrances and will return the streets outside of their designation to how they were in 2019. The existing environment beyond these entrances is not well suited to such a significant change and concerns have been raised that it will be unsafe, unsuitable and uninviting for users of the station and the neighbourhood. There is a well-supported vision for what the neighbourhood should look and feel like for users and visitors in the area. This is supported by wider Council strategies including the City Centre Master Plan and Access for Everyone. Currently, four years of construction and the impact of covid have significantly changed traffic behavior in a positive way and there is an opportunity to build on this to create a pedestrian friendly environment and cater for a wider range of transport modes.

The Karanga-a-Hape Station Neighbourhood Network Improvements Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) project aims to take advantage of the current construction closures to enhance the

CRL station further by modifying the wider receiving environment through changes to traffic circulation and the repurposing of general traffic lanes for bus priority, cycle lanes and wider footpaths. According to the current CRL timeframes the streets around the station entrances will be reinstated from mid-2023. This gives less than 18 months to discuss and agree on a plan and produce detailed designs to integrate with the CRL plans. This process is already underway with a Single Stage Business Case for the improvements endorsed by the AT project control group in November 2022. This is now with Waka Kotahi for approval.

Because of the common law right to pass and repass on a road there are very few legislative powers available to AT to permanently block off a road that has been constructed to carry motor vehicles. Those being the road stopping process (where the legal status of being a road is completely stripped from a section of land) or creating a pedestrian mall on part of the road.

Under section 336 of the Local Government Act 1974 a council (or AT in the Auckland) has the power to declare a specified road or part of a specified road to be a pedestrian mall and prohibit vehicles from driving on it.

This process can be used to deliberately convert an area of road into a pedestrian focused space more like a public park or plaza than a road for the movement of vehicles, or to just create a short blockage to prevent through movement of vehicles. This proposal would be the first of those options – creating a specific pedestrian focused space at the entry to the train station.

AT is proposing to use this power to introduce a section of pedestrian mall to prevent motor vehicles from moving through Mercury Lane between the existing vehicle crossing at #2 Mercury Lane and Karangahape Road,. This Statement of Proposal you are being asked to approve forms part of the special consultative procedure that AT is required to follow under section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.

C. PROPOSAL

AT preferred proposal is to provide of combination of a pedestrian mall and shared space split on Mercury Lane. This approach would allow for vehicles to continue to access the vehicle entrances that open onto the lower section of this block (Karangahape to Cross Street) as a shared zone and declare only the upper portion of the block to be a pedestrian mall separated and prohibit motor vehicles from driving on or parking on that section of Mercury Lane. The boundary for the mall is outlined in the purple shaded area on the diagram seen in Addendum 1. There would be a physical obstruction (type to be confirmed i.e. a form of bollard, street furniture etc) _to block vehicles from moving through the pedestrian mall. The rest of the Mercury Lane (from south of Cross Street to Canada Street) would remain open for southbound general traffic as currently although it will be reduced to a single traffic lane with proposed widened footpaths and a bi-directional cycleway on the western side. That change will be consulted on as part of the wider neighbourhood consultation process.

The statement of proposal includes one alternative proposal so that the consultation can elicit feedback on both options.

The alternative option is to create a shared space on Mercury Lane from Karangahape Road to south of the intersection of Cross Street and Mercury Lane. This would allow vehicles and pedestrian to mix in this space, but the shared zone laws would apply so that vehicles would have to give way to pedestrians (but pedestrians cannot unduly block the progress of moving vehicles). This option is attached as Addendum 2.

It is proposed that different users/activities will have different levels of vehicle access to the pedestrian mall part of Mercury Lane. This level of access will respond to user/activity needs and what is safe based on the high volume of pedestrians that will be present once the Karanga-a-Hape Station opens. Frequent vehicle movements would make Mercury Lane less safe for the high number of pedestrians expected in the future. There are different types of access that can be permitted:

- Access through the retractable bollards AND the ability to park on the pedestrian mall
- Access through the retractable bollards with NO ability to park on the pedestrian mall
- NO access through the retractable bollards, but permitted on the southern section of the pedestrianised area
- NO ACCESS

Proposed prohibition

For the pedestrian mall options, it is proposed that the driving, riding or parking of any motor vehicle would be prohibited on the pedestrian mall at all times subject to the following exemptions.

Proposed exemptions

The exemptions for the pedestrian mall would allow:

- Cycles, and wheeled recreational devices will be exempt from the prohibition and may access any part of the pedestrian mall at all times but must give priority to pedestrians.
- Motor vehicles required for construction, maintenance or services work for the road and buildings facing the road would be able to apply to AT for access on a case-by-case basis.
- Emergency vehicles requiring access to Mercury Lane

The wider neighbourhood changes proposed will see the southern portion of Mercury Lane realigned to increase space for pedestrians and people on bikes accessing the station. The traffic circulation will remain one way southbound through this section.

Funding for the more extensive Preferred Option proposal is covered by three sources, which in total will provide around \$17.1M made up from:

- A Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) line item CRL Road-side projects for \$7.3M – this is dependent on Waka Kotahi approval of the associated Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) with a decision expected early 2023.
- Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of \$5M for active mode improvements - approved
- City Centre Targeted Rates (CCTR) through Auckland Council of \$4.5M for public realm / place-making improvements plus around \$300,000 for design phase – this has been approved by the Local Board and a Group Services Agreement is currently being developed up with Auckland Council.

A detailed cost estimate has been independently completed for the Preferred Option for the entire project which, for Design and Implementation, is expected to cost between \$14.6M (P50) - \$17.5M (P95). Auckland Council and Eke Panuku both strongly support the urban realm improvements and with the Group Services Agreement representatives will now become part of the project working group and Project Control Group.



Image: Potential design of upper Mercury Lane Pedestrian mall looking down toward the station entrance

Proposed prohibition

For the pedestrian mall option, it is proposed that the driving, riding or parking of any motor vehicle would be prohibited on the pedestrian mall at all times subject to the following exemptions.

Proposed exemptions

The exemptions for the pedestrian mall would allow:

- Cycles, and wheeled recreational devices will be exempt from the prohibition and may access any part of the pedestrian mall at all times but must give priority to pedestrians.
- Motor vehicles required for construction, maintenance or services work for the road and buildings facing the road would be able to apply to AT for access on a case-by-case basis.
- Emergency vehicles requiring access to Mercury Lane

D. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL:

The main reasons for the proposed Pedestrian Mall (or as Shared Space as an alternative) are set out below:

- The project would provide an important priority and space for passengers accessing the CRL station given that it is anticipated that the number of pedestrians at the station doorway during peak times would not safely be contained on just a footpath. The modelling predicts over 9,000 pedestrians using the Mercury Lane entrance by 2028 increasing to nearly 12,500 by 2048.
- A pedestrian focused space would provide opportunities for other services to be provided to pedestrians in this location.

- It would leverage off traffic behaviour change has already occurred due to construction.
- The project would align with the key objectives set out in the Access for Everyone, City Centre Master Plan, Future Connect, Climate Action & Emissions Reduction, Road to Zero and Karangahape Road Plan 2014-2044 strategies.

E. VIEWING OF DOCUMENTS AND OBTAINING COPIES:

This Statement of Proposal will be made available to the public in accordance with section 83 LGA 2002.

Copies of this Statement of Proposal may be viewed, and a copy obtained via:

- a) Contacting Auckland Transport Contact Centre on 09-3553553.
- b) Auckland Transport's Head Office, Reception area, 20 Viaduct Harbour Avenue, Auckland Central.
- c) Auckland Transport's website - <https://at.govt.nz/>.

F. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS ON THE PROPOSAL:

Internal and external stakeholder pre-engagement

There is strong support for the project and the Preferred Option within AT, the council family and key stakeholders.

Written endorsement has been received from the City Centre Steering Committee (SteerCo) and from the Karangahape Road Business Association (KBA). City Centre Transport Initiatives and Access For Everyone (A4E) supports the project as it aligns with A4E objectives and outcomes. Eke Panuku has embedded this project in their development plans for the area and leveraged the approach for improvements to the Maungawhau Station precinct. CRL support the project with caveats to tie into the Link Alliance (LKA) programme and not add to the LKA scope. AT Mana Whenua have said the project aligns with their values and are keen to be involved as partners.

Through the AT Design Review Panel (DRP) process, the Gate 1 Concept Design has been approved and the design work has been submitted to Gate 2 with feedback expected late January 2023.

Karanga-a-Hape Station interfaces directly with the rapid Northwest Bus corridor and will provide extended and continuous bus priority for the services. There will be a combined consultation for both projects for the Karangahape area.

Feedback about the proposed improvements from early engagement with key stakeholders has generally been positive. An online stakeholder meeting was held in July 2022 and individual stakeholders mostly identified through the Karangahape Business Association have been engaged with since.

Improvements for safety are understood and well-accepted. Footpath enhancements have been welcomed. Recommendations for dedicated lanes and priority for buses and cycles are usually well supported. Cycle lanes are generally well received but concerns about clashes with pedestrians and cars have been raised.

With regards to the proposed closure to vehicles of the upper part of Mercury Lane there are some concerns about how the closure will make it harder for drivers to access car parks on Cross Street. Businesses around to Mercury Lane have concerns about access and space for loading and servicing, particularly for delivery of large items like beer kegs, etc. There is strong opposition

from one apartment owner on Mercury Lane (possibly representing others) about the longer detour that will be needed to access the carpark if the road is closed.

Both Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and St Johns have been engaged with on more than one occasion. They use this route to get to the Eden Terrace / Dominion Road area and are opposed to anything that would increase response time. FENZ advised in December 2022 that currently their large aerial trucks aren't using Mercury Lane due to the narrow road width and location of speed humps, from the CRL construction works. FENZ advised the project team that closing Mercury Lane may present an issue for St Johns. The project team and other AT teams are continuing to work with the services to look at emergency access throughout the city centre. Further meetings are planned to be initiated with St Johns throughout the consultation period.

Public consultation and placemaking

Public consultation on the proposed transport, parking and road priority changes will occur in early 2023. This will be a joint consultation with other proposed bus priority changes for the Northwest bus improvements on Karangahape Road and Newton Road.

This consultation will gather important considerations and ideas to incorporate into the design of the streets. This will include feedback on the potential types of controls that could be used for the pedestrian mall.

Closely following the consultation, additional community engagement will occur for a placemaking process that will involve stakeholders and partners to work together to improve public amenity within the project's bounds to make the area socially and economically thrive while respecting its heritage.

Any person (or organisation) may make a submission or objection to this proposal. AT actively encourages anyone with an interest to do so. We will communicate with affected parties and members of the public to share information about the proposal and advise how submissions and/or objections can be made.

Written submissions

Anyone who wishes to make a written submission may present their views either by submitting an online form (via Auckland Transport's website) or by a hard copy version. Physical submission forms will be posted to homes and businesses nearby the project area and can be sent to by request with a replied paid envelope enclosed. Other activities to raise awareness of the proposal and encourage submissions include (but are not limited to) advertising, social media, media releases, online content, public drop-in days and on-street signage.

Submissions in person

Anyone who has an interest and/or is affected by the proposal can make a submission in person in spoken form or sign language. They have a right to do so, under the terms outlined in the Special Consultative Procedure required for declaring a pedestrian mall. Any request to make a submission in person, should be submitted to AT, who will then convene a special public meeting. This meeting will involve hearing all submissions in person (any special arrangements such as interpretation support can be organised in advance). Persons who request to make their submission in person will be notified 2 weeks prior to a special public meeting being held at Auckland Transport premises at 20 Viaduct Harbour Avenue, Auckland Central. No greater weight is placed on submissions made in person than those made in written form; all submissions are considered equally.

All written submissions and requests to be heard in person must be received by AT no later than the 1-calendar month after the consultation period starts. Further arrangements will be made for those who wish to be heard to attend a special public meeting.

G. AFTER CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL

Following consultation on the proposal and consideration of the submissions received, AT will decide whether to go ahead with the combined pedestrian mall or shared space on Mercury Lane. This decision will be aligned to other related decisions on the broader Karangahape station neighbourhood proposals. If AT does progress with the combination of a pedestrian mall/ shared space declaration information about the decision will be shared in various ways including, but not limited to the AT website, press releases and social media.

In accordance with section 336(3) of the Local Government Act 1974 anyone can appeal to the Environment Court against the declaration. Appeals to the Environment Court need to be made within 1 month after the making of the declaration, or within such further time as the Environment Court may allow. On appeal, the Environment Court may quash or affirm the declaration, or affirm the declaration with modification.

A declaration does not take effect until the time for appealing to the Environment Court has expired and any appeals have been determined.

All outcomes of the consultation, including the decision to declare a pedestrian mall or not, any changes to the proposal, next steps and any implications these may have for the public, will be communicated to all submitters, and made publicly available on AT's website (with links shared through a media release and social media).