



20 Viaduct Harbour Avenue, Auckland 1010
Private Bag 92250, Auckland 1142, New Zealand
+64 9 355 3553 | at.govt.nz

3 October 2025

Mayor Wayne Brown

By email: Mayor.Wayne.Brown@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Dear Mayor Brown,

Thank you for your letter of 17 September.

In it you highlight concerns regarding the flow of information and updates on traffic related operational changes within the City Centre. We agree that the city centre is a very important area of focus and of high public interest and acknowledge the role of Auckland Transport in managing and implementing these changes.

Our approach is to ensure we align with the City Centre Action Plan and Masterplan, and balance network demands including changing travel patterns, roadworks (AT) and infrastructure projects (including those of CRL, Vector, Watercare and NZICC).

Regarding the 'no surprises' expectation, city centre updates on key projects and future plans are regularly reported through to the Auckland Council's Policy & Planning Committee. We also work collaboratively with Auckland Council officers and specifically through the City Centre Lead to ensure network modifications are coordinated and communicated. While we regularly discuss operational and disruption-related changes with the council officers, we welcome the opportunity to directly present these more regular updates to elected members or your office.

Regarding the two situations mentioned in your letter:

Shared westbound through / left lane at Hobson St / Victoria St signals

On the matter of congestion at the left turn from Victoria St onto Hobson St, we have examined traffic patterns and developed several options to address this issue. A summary of both short and long term solutions was submitted to the City Centre Steering Group in April (with a further update to the Mayor's office on 25 August 2025), including a proposal for an additional westbound through lane.

Analysis indicated converting to a shared through / left lane would reduce congestion for vehicles turning left from Victoria St into Hobson St. While the change could increase queuing for westbound traffic, the assessment concluded there would be an overall net benefit at the intersection, this was implemented on 27 May. Subsequent monitoring found that the intersection has operated more efficiently. We will continue to monitor this intersection and agree it is challenging.

Shared Barnes Dance

Barnes Dance phasing at Victoria St / Nelson St is part of a formal traffic control trial managed by Auckland Transport for a 12-month period. Signal phasing was also introduced at other intersections along Te Ha Noa (Queen St and Federal St). This shared Barnes Dance phasing trial was included as part of the initial consultation for the cycleway and was also included in the midtown communications around the opening of Te Ha Noa. Intersections involved in the trial are being closely monitored, including video surveys of operations and surveys of user experience conducted both in person and online.

For this particular intersection, pedestrian signal timings for the Barnes Dance crossing have been adjusted, reducing clearance time from 34 seconds to 22 seconds. The impact on pedestrians, especially those using the longer diagonal created by the intersection layout, continues to be monitored.



Upcoming projects and changes on the network

We have discussed with you the benefit of a refresh of the City Centre Master Plan, you have confirmed this is one of your priorities with the new Council. The benefits as we see it are political alignment which has become less so in recent years, an opportunity to review elements of the original urban design philosophy and reconsider traffic movement alongside stakeholder needs and expectations.

A review will also occur post much of the significant disruption associated with CRL. Having said this there is always a 'bedding in' period for any of changes, we therefore strongly recommend movement is monitored, allow changes to settle in adjust and then if more significant change is warranted design these at this stage.

On a related note we have been working with Council officers to develop the Midtown Traffic Circulation Plan, this is focused on the Midtown/Te Waihorotiu Station neighbourhood area (including the Aotea Arts Quarter), The Plan aims to maximise the benefits of the City Rail Link opening next year through addressing network integration with place functions, and pedestrians and public transport user experience.

This approach draws together key precinct-level outcomes from the City Centre Bus Plan, Access for Everyone (A4E), and Room to Move: City Centre, by establishing a staged implementation approach that delivers targeted improvements ahead of the CRL.

The Midtown Traffic Circulation Plan consists of two stages: the Wellesley Street bus lane and Aotea Quarter circulation improvements. The Wellesley Street improvements include parking, loading and servicing changes as well as optimisation of the traffic signals, noting that it is also one of four city centre streets identified for bus priority. This plan is being refined in discussion with key stakeholders, elected members and feedback from the City Centre Advisory Group. We welcome further discussion with you and your office about these plans, including the site visit requested. Implementation of the Wellesley Street changes are scheduled for February 2026 to be in place well before CRL opens.

Please note the Albert Street bus corridor will be operational at the end of November, shortly followed by the Vincent Street bus improvements which include bus stops and shelters on Mayoral Drive, which are aligned with the Symphony Centre development. Bus services, particularly the Northwestern rapid transit services, will then re-route to use Albert Street from Queen and Hobson Streets.

As these works become operational, we will continue to conduct comprehensive reviews of network performance and traffic signal optimisation. The results of ongoing network monitoring will be presented to the Policy and Planning Committee at a future meeting.

Auckland Transport continues to work very hard to ensure a no surprises approach and open engagement with key stakeholders and elected members across the region and including the city centre. We remain committed to this, evidence this approach is working is in our SOI target relating to local board engagement, at 78% this is an excellent result. The work we do is always aligned with the City Centre Master Plan and communicated through the various political and stakeholder engagement platforms.

Yours sincerely

Dean Kimpton
Chief Executive

cc: Richard Leggat
Phil Wilson

Attachments : Albert St Bus changes memo
Midtown Traffic Circulation Memo