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**From:** official information  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 3 March 2021 13:41  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** official information  
**Subject:** Final Response - LGOIMA 21031 - [REDACTED] - Onion Rd and Ruffell Rd Intersection

Dear [REDACTED]

**RE: RUFFELL ROAD /ONION ROAD INTERSECTION – 21031**

In preparing our response to your request received on 3 February 2021 we are providing some additional information to your request.

The purpose for including this additional information is to provide context as to why the changes to the Onion Road / Ruffell Road intersection were implemented on Wednesday 16 December 2020.

**Additional Information**

The changes at the intersection of Onion Road and Ruffell Road, implemented on Wednesday 16 December 2020, were the outcome of discussions with KiwiRail to address the immediate safety issues at the adjacent Ruffell Road rail crossing impacting both road and rail users.

The new road layout is designed to minimise future damage to the railway and roading structures, while increasing safety for both road and rail traffic at this junction and the Ruffell Road rail crossing.

Key concerns with the intersection and its safety issues that resulted in the changes were:

- The intersection's alignment did not allow heavy vehicles to safely make the left turn from Onion Road into Ruffell Road without illegally crossing the centre line.
- The railway crossing barrier arm has been damaged on occasions with vehicles turning left as they've driven over the rail tracks, increasing the risk of trains and vehicles colliding as the barrier arm is not operating properly.
- There have been six strikes on the barrier arm in 2020 (to 7 December).
- The length of the barrier arm makes it vulnerable to high winds when it's upright, so a wind fork is in place to ensure the arm returns to its correct position. Recently, the wind fork was damaged and has had to be temporarily removed.

There are future plans to upgrade the roading network in this area. However these are still some years away. The changes at the intersection of Onion Road and Ruffell Road address KiwiRail's immediate safety issues and allow the Ruffell Road rail crossing to remain open to road users.

**Request (1)**

What is the final solution in the near term (0-1 month) to eliminate and mitigate any increased risks that HCC and Kiwirail have bestowed on the meek people of Hamilton west?

**Response (1)**

The current intersection arrangement is the solution in the near term (0-1 months). As part of implementing this arrangement staff have / are undertaking the following steps:

- monitoring the intersection, assessing driver behaviour – the outcome of this monitoring will be used to assess future options.

- Staff have held a site visit with KiwiRail staff (26 January 2021) to discuss whether their barrier arm can be relocated – currently KiwiRail are assessing what can be done and will be providing us an update (NB: at the time of preparing this response we have not received confirmation when we can expect an update)
- A Level Crossing Safety Assessment of the Ruffell Road rail crossing is also planned for mid-February 2021.

In conjunction with our on-site monitoring, the outputs from the assessments of the possible barrier arm relocation and safety of the Level Crossing will be used to inform any future changes to this intersection, including the option of closing of the Ruffell Road rail crossing to all traffic.

#### **Request (2)**

Is HCC fighting this with Kiwirail on behalf of ratepayers including WDC ratepayers, if not, why not?

#### **Response (2)**

Hamilton City Council is supportive of creating a safe environment at this location and we are continuing to work with KiwiRail to develop suitable solutions. Waikato District Council has been made aware of the issues and the reasons why we have taken the steps that we have.

#### **Request (3)**

In the event of an accident, are you concerned that Kiwirail, HCC, their executives or you personally maybe noted as a contributing party for your actions / in actions?

#### **Response (3)**

Our focus is on ensuring the transport network supports good travel choices that are safe, easy and connected. As noted above once we have the results/findings of the assessments in conjunction with our monitoring observations we will be in the position to make an informed decision regarding any future changes to this intersection.

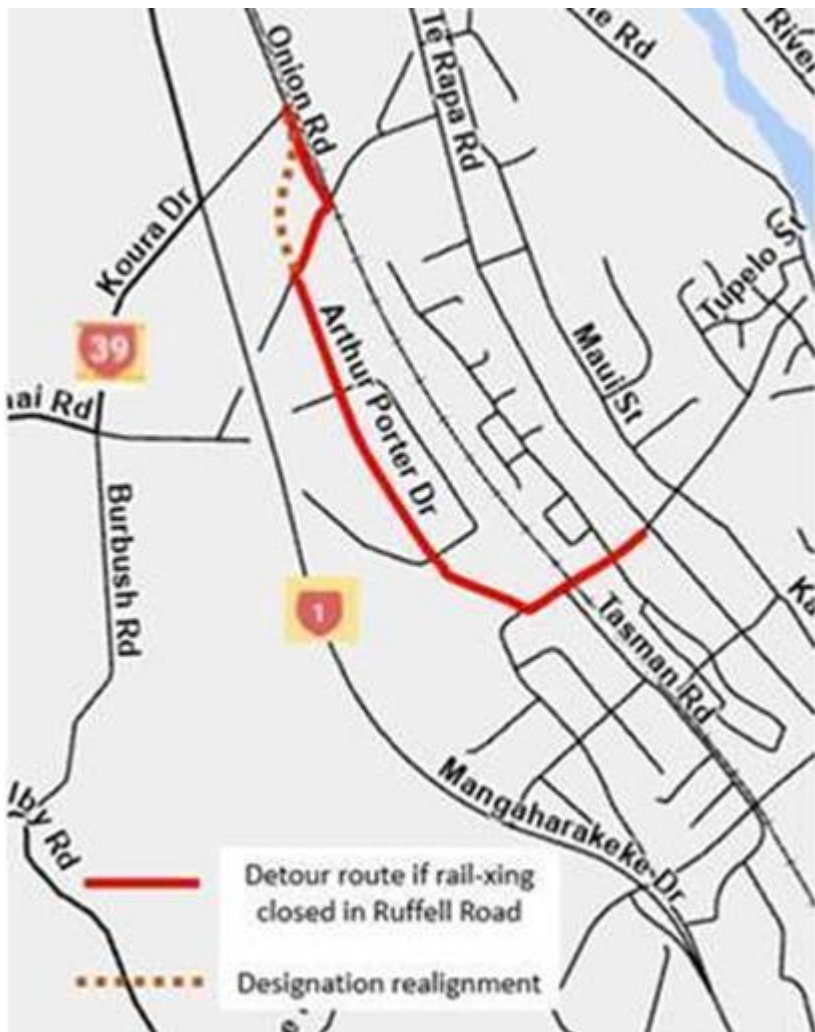
#### **Request (4)**

Can you suggest how I could / should elevate this issue more if you cannot?

#### **Response (4)**

The long term solution for this situation is the realignment of Onion Road through to Arthur Porter Drive. This alignment has recently been designated (please see image below). In the draft 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, construction of the Onion Road realignment is proposed to commence in Year 7/8.

Onion Road Designation Alignment



You are welcome to make a submission on the draft Long Term Plan regarding the proposed timing of the Onion Road realignment. The draft Long Term Plan will be out for public consultation in March 2021.

If you have any concerns with the decision referred to in this response, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

For your information, the Ombudsman's contact details are:

**Email:** [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz)

**Post:** PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

**Telephone:** 0800 802 602

Kind Regards,

**Tatiyana**

Official Information Team | Legal Services & Risk

Email: [officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz)

Hamilton City Council | Private Bag 3010 | Hamilton 3240 | [www.hamilton.govt.nz](http://www.hamilton.govt.nz)

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, 2 March 2021 4:27 p.m.  
To: official information <[officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz)>  
Cc: Jason Harrison <[Jason.Harrison@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:Jason.Harrison@hcc.govt.nz)>  
Subject: RE: ruffle rd / Onion rd intersection

Michelle / Jason

It appears my emails was sent for an OIR

Why have I not yet had a response to below? 20 days is up

Also I have not had any feedback on the attached email either

I am 100% happy to take a call, I just wanted to hear whats going on.

If I don't hear back from either of you 2, where do I go then?

Regards,

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From: official information <[officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz)>  
Sent: Friday, 5 February 2021 2:19 pm  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: official information <[officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz)>  
Subject: FW: ruffle rd / Onion rd intersection  
Importance: High

**WARNING:** Email from **EXTERNAL** sender. Please exercise caution and do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe

Kia ora

I write to acknowledge your information request of 2 February 2021 as below.

Your request has been passed on to the relevant team within Council and you will be informed of the outcome.

The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 requires that we advise you of our decision on whether the Council will provide the requested information or not as soon as reasonably practicable, and no later than 20 working days after the day we received your request. We will respond to you no later than **Wednesday 3 March 2021**.

Kind regards, Michelle

Email: [officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:officialinformation@hcc.govt.nz)

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 February 2021 3:43 PM  
**To:** Jason Harrison <[Jason.Harrison@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:Jason.Harrison@hcc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** ruffle rd / Onion rd intersection

Hi Jason

I am sure you can throw this on top of all your other complaints.

I live in Rotokauri and use the above mentioned intersection 4 or 5 times a day, so generally 8-10 times through that intersection, as does my family, friends, relatives as well as other common folks.

Since the change I witness 60- 75% of the time, people taking the illegal left turn on to Ruffle right, and illegal right turns in to Onion Rd. The lesser the traffic, the more the infringement as they obviously feel its ok, but with more traffic 1 out of 5 will still take the illegal turn.

The amount of confusion, misunderstanding, lack of following the rules contributes to near misses nearly every time, I have witnessed 3 near misses today, this also adds confusion for other road users. All the while making this intersection far unsafer for more road users than what I can assume being the case under the previous intersection layout.

In business we are required by Worksafe to eliminate and mitigate any potential risks or the Company / Directors / officers could be criminally liable.

I have been kept updated through news, letters and the mighty Facebook.

1. What is the final solution in the near term (0-1 month) to eliminate and mitigate any increased risks that HCC and Kiwirail have bestowed on the meek people of Hamilton west?
2. Is HCC fighting this with Kiwirail on behalf of ratepayers including WDC ratepayers, if not, why not?
3. In the event of an accident, are you concerned that Kiwirail, HCC, their executives or you personally maybe noted as a contributing party for your actions / in actions?
4. Can you suggest how I could / should elevate this issue more if you can not?

And just like Cindy says "Be Kind", which you include everyones family getting home each night.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

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