Links Ave trial community meeting – directly affected residents

Tauranga City

Agenda

- Introduction
- Background for the trial
- Community feedback and trial data
- Questions
- Next Steps
- Meeting close

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Links Avenue

- Links Avenue is a local road that should cater for residential traffic associated with those that live in the street, plus some traffic associated with the school.
- In the Transport System Plan (30year transport blueprint) Links Avenue has three priority modes: residential traffic, walking and cycling and PT.
- Before to the Bayfair to Baypark (B2B) project started, traffic volumes were approximately 2,000vpd.
  - Counts prior to the trial showed traffic had increased to 7,500vpd (peak volume) and rose by 2,000vpd in the last 12 months alone.
  - Without traffic using it as a through route, volumes should return to 2,000vpd.
- There are approximately 6,000 people that catch a bus in Links Avenue each month, with 2/3 being school children.
- There are a large number of children that live in the area that walk and cycle to schools in the immediate area.

Safety Concerns

- There have been concerned raised about the safety of vulnerable users (walking and cycling) using Links Avenue especially with the shared path and proximity of the southbound vehicle lane.
- The bus lane was installed approximately 2 years ago to provide better reliability for bus users after delays were caused by the increasing traffic volumes, but this resulted in the southbound vehicle lane shifting closer to the shared path.
- With increasing traffic volumes using the street, this has created an unacceptable level of risk of a serious or fatal accident occurring. There have been near misses last year.
- The **key safety issue in the street is traffic volume**. With a lower traffic volume, the bus lane could be removed, cyclists would be safer using the road and the street layout could be made to look residential.
- The arterial routes in Arataki are Oceanbeach Rd, Golf Rd, and Girven Rd. These are designed to carry the higher traffic volumes. Links Avenue is not a third arterial route, it is a residential street.

Street Hierarchy

- Arterial Roads – These are designed to move traffic between destinations and are designed to move large volumes.

- Collector Road – These act as a funnel and local road traffic moves onto the collector road before going onto the Arterial Road.

- Residential – These are designed to cater for the movement of people between their homes to the collector roads.

Cul-de-sac trial overview

- The cul-de-sac trial took place over 5 weeks from November 15 – December 17
- The trial prioritized the safety of vulnerable users (walking, cycling, or taking the bus) over the convenience for motorists
- The trial was intended to test a reduced traffic volume on Links Avenue and to see if the wider network can cope with the diverted traffic flows.
- There were two trial sites considered and the Ascot Road location was selected because it would create the lowest volume of traffic past the school - maximizing potential safety benefits. The alternative site was at Concorde Avenue.

Road network issues

- Successive councils have not funded improvements to the wider roading network while allowing housing development to continue. There have been no significant roading improvements for the last 10 years when the population was significantly lower.
- Congestion is a reflection of the traffic volumes on the network when there is insufficient capacity for the volume of traffic. It has occured in other parts of the city for over 10 years (Welcome Bay) and is now affecting most of the city.
    - **As a city we need to start moving differently or the current congestion will continue to increase.**
- Traffic needs to drive at different times of the day, use different modes to travel and reduce the number of daily trips from each house. A 10% reduction in traffic volume is what we typically have in the school holidays and congestion is substantially less.
- When the B2B project started, traffic diverted to rat run the local network to avoid congestion on the State Highway.

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Community feedback overview

- Direct engagement over phone or email from over 350 people throughout the course of the 5-week trial (250 in the first 2 weeks)
  - The key observations of that feedback summarised in the “Mid-point pulse check” in early December

- A community survey conducted by TCC with over 300 responses
  - Approximately 50% of the respondents were directly affected residents

- A survey conducted by the Papamoa Resident and Ratepayers Association (PPRA) and Tauranga Ratepayers Alliance (TRA) with over 1000 responses
  - 98% did not support the cul-de-sac
  - Reasons cited were increased travel times, a loss of convivence, and an expectation that Links Ave was one of 3 arterial routes through Arataki.

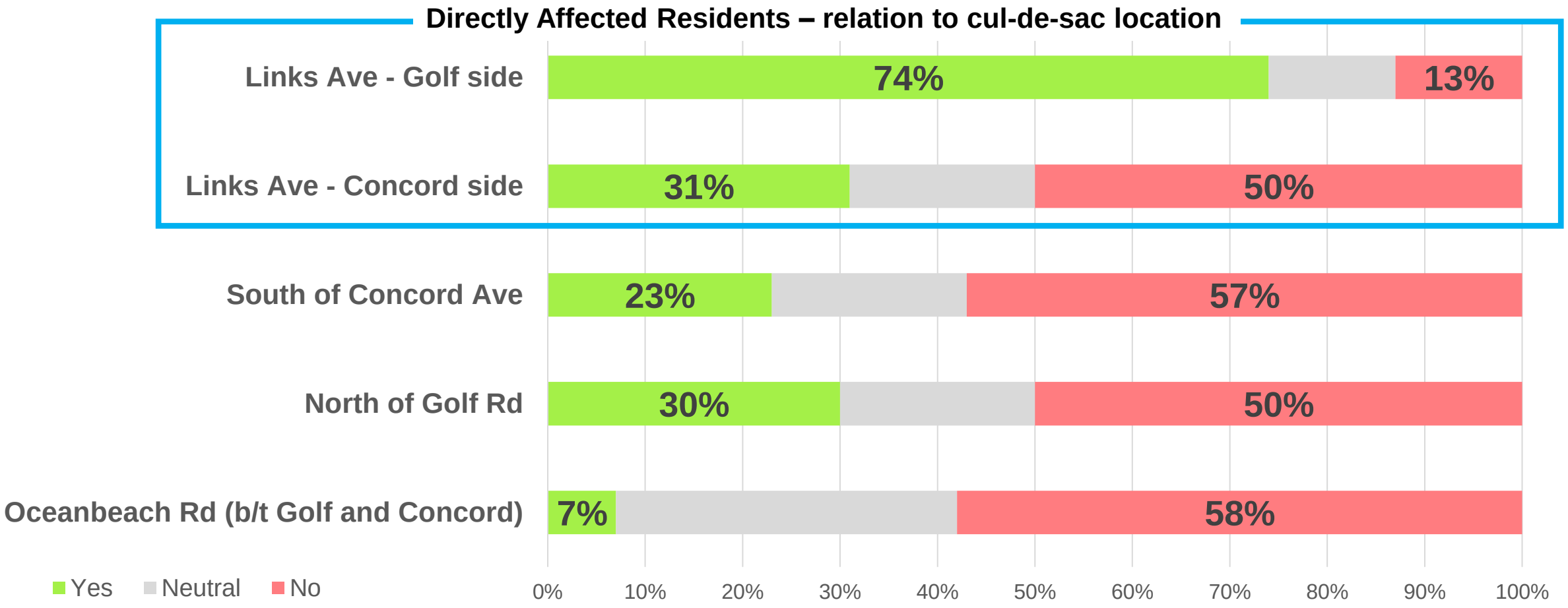
Mid-point pulse check - key observations from feedback received to date

- There was a noticeable reduction in traffic on Links Ave and improved safety for kids walking and biking
- Residents on Links Ave were finding the street more enjoyable
- There was concern that the proximately of southbound travel lane to the shared path and the frequency and speed of buses was still the main safety risk and not addressed by the cul-de-sac
- The location of the cul-de-sac at Ascot was creating a big inconvenience for directly affected residents who could not access Golf Rd. This was causing increased travel times and frustration
- Diverted traffic from Links Ave was increasing traffic volumes and bad driving behavior on other streets (Oceanbeach Rd and Ascot Rd most frequently mentioned)
- Travel times through Arataki had increased due to the impact of the cul-de-sac

Community feedback and trial data

- Community Feedback – Improved safety
- Community Feedback – A more pleasant street
- Community Feedback – Preferred location of cul-de-sac
- Traffic counts and travel time data

Do you agree that the safety of children walking and cycling along Links Ave improved during the trial?



Key observations from respondents who disagreed that safety improved on Links Avenue

- The southbound traffic lane and the buses that drive in it are still to close to the shared path – this is/was the real safety issue

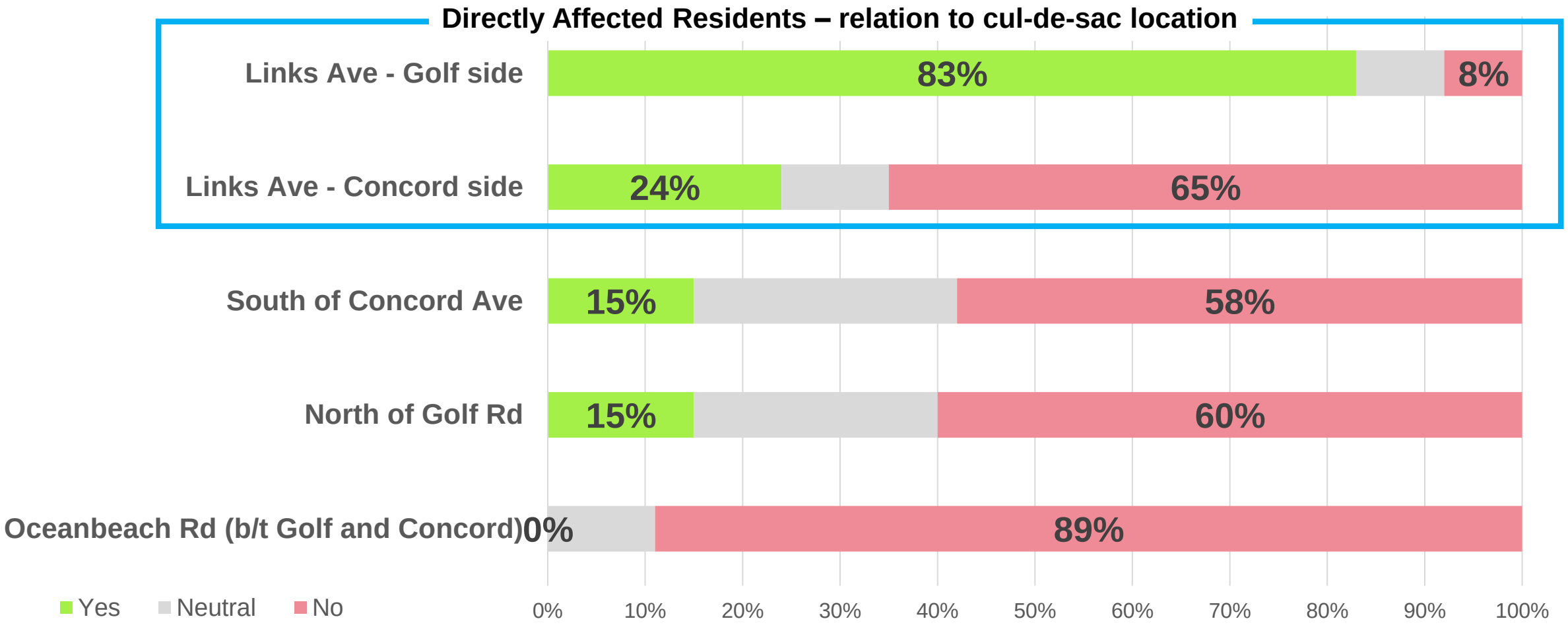
- Buses and cars continue to drive fast along Links Ave (higher risk given the proximity of the traffic lane

- With less traffic on Links Ave – kids were cycling all over the road

Community feedback and trial data

- Community Feedback – Improved safety
- Community Feedback – A more pleasant street
- Community Feedback – Preferred location of cul-de-sac
- Traffic counts and travel time data

Do you agree that your street was more pleasant to live in during the trial?



Key observations from respondents who disagreed that their street was more pleasant

- The loss of convenience without access to and from Golf Rd.
- Additional travel times when driving through Arataki
- More traffic on their streets (specifically Oceanbeach Rd and Ascot Rd)
  - This forced people to drive irrationally creating new risks for drivers, cyclist, and people trying to cross the street

Community Feedback and trial data

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If a cul-de-sac were to remain, which location would you prefer?

Location of Respondents	Same location as during the trial	Alternate location (B/t Solway Pl and Concord Ave)
Directly Affected – Golf Rd side of cul-de-sac	58%	42%
Directly Affected – Concord Ave side of cul-de-sac	13%	87%
South of Concord Ave	66%	34%
North of Golf Rd	40%	60%
Oceanbeach Rd – between Golf Rd and Concord Ave	34%	66%

Community Feedback and trial data

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Traffic count and travel time monitoring overview

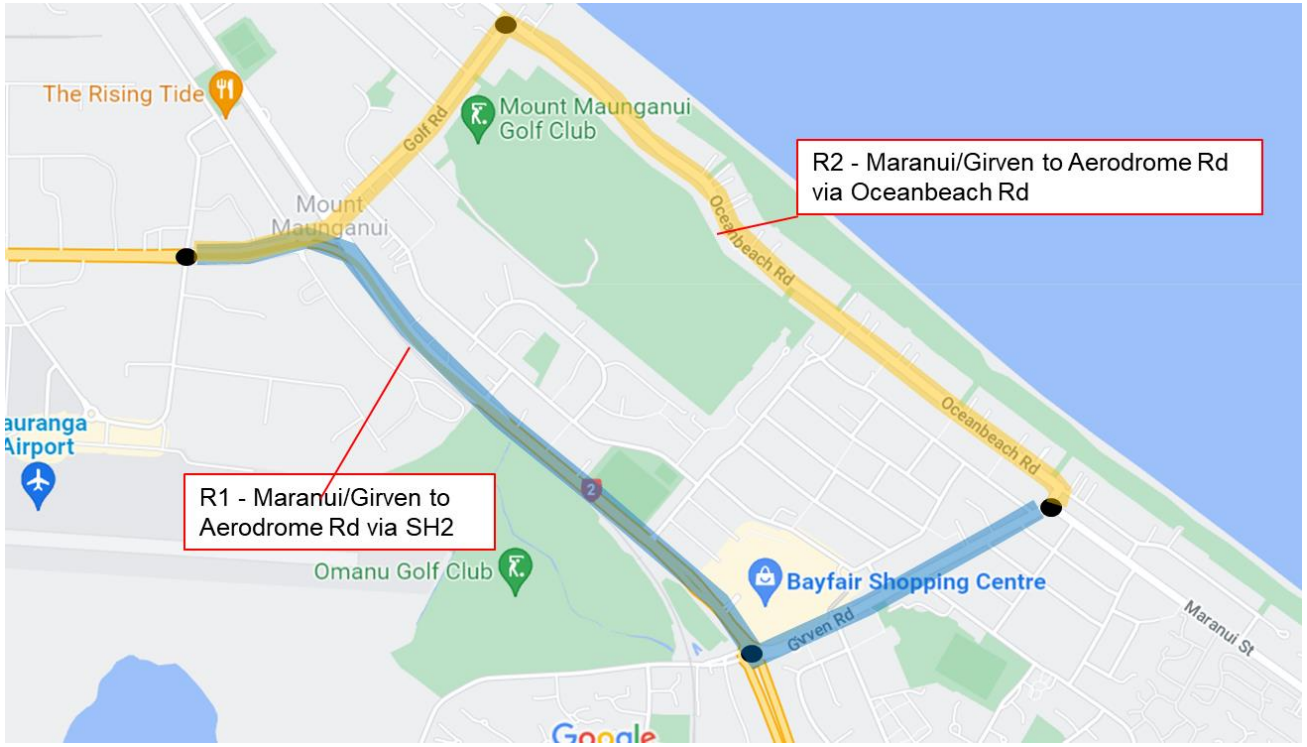
- Standard traffic counts were conducted at six locations across Arataki using temporary tubes attached to the road surface.
  - Baseline data collected: Oct 26 – Nov 02
  - Trial data collected: Dec 02 - Dec 8
- Data from the APNR (license plate detection) camera was used to approximate the number of vehicles traveling through the cul-de-sac.
  - Between 1500 – 2000 daily after first week of settling in period
- Addinsight probes were installed at locations around Arataki that can anonymously track Bluetooth signals from vehicles to approximate travel times for two route segments within Arataki
  - Baseline data collected: Nov 8 – 14
  - Trial data collected: 24/7 through the end of the trial
  - Increased travel times only observed in peak commute times (7:30-9:00, 17:00-18:30)

Traffic Count data analysis key findings

- Links Avenue no longer operates at 5,500 vehicles per day. The weekday average is now 7,000vpd and peaked at 7,500vpd during our baseline readings.
- The cul-de-sac was able to reduce the through movements on Links Avenue by about 70%. Traffic on the Golf Rd. side of the cul-de-sac reduced by about 58% while the Concord Ave side reduced by about 38%.
- Oceanbeach Rd was the preferred alternative route for those avoiding Links Avenue. This caused an increase of about 3,000vpd to a weekday average of 17,400
- Golf Rd and Concord Ave also saw increases in traffic volumes, but to a lesser degree than Oceanbeach Rd at 900vpd and 1,100vpd respectively

Travel time analysis – key findings

- PM commute times were affected more than AM commute times
- Route R2 (Golf & Oceanbeach)
  - PM: 2.3 min - 3.7 min
  - AM: 35 sec – 1.4 min
- Route R1 (Girven, Bayfair RAB, SH2)
  - PM: 40 sec - 3.3 min
  - AM: 25 sec – 50 sec
- While individual experiences may vary, the data shows the wider network was able to cope



Trial outcomes summary

- The Trial showed that the cul-de-sac did reduce volume on Links Avenue and the wider transport network coped with that changed volume.
- The location of the cul-de-sac at Ascot was inconvenient for residents on Links Avenue and the streets directly off it.
- Golf Road was the preferred exit point for residents that live in Links Avenue and the streets off it.
- The 5-week trial did not allow sufficient time for the wider traffic to change behaviors such as the time of travel, the number of trips, use of alternatives etc. We would expect the congestion on Oceanbeach Road to reduce with time as traffic patterns changed.
- Small changes to traffic lights on Golf Road eased congestion during the trial and other improvements would be possible in the wider network to improve traffic flows.

Trial outcomes summary (cont)

- There is an unacceptable high risk of a serious or fatal accident on Links Avenue. The street cannot be left in its current state.
- The only way to improve safety for vulnerable users on Links Avenue is to reduce the traffic volume using the street.
- A permanently reduced volume of traffic on Links Avenue would provide an opportunity to change the look and feel of the street and return things such as on street carparks, plant street trees etc.

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Next steps

- A report on the outcomes of the trial will be presented to Commissioners on February 14th. It will also recommend an additional trial of the cul-de-sac but located at the Concord Ave end of Links Ave.
- Key highlights of the trial include:
  - All directly affected residents will have access to Golf Rd - however only buses, bicycles and motorbikes may enter or exit Links Ave from Concord Ave.
  - Links Ave and Spur Ave will be dropped to a 30km/h
  - Removal of the existing bus lane and a new transition layout that will move the southbound traffic lane away from the shared path and create a safer environment for people biking along the entire length of Links Ave
  - Discussions would be held with the Links Avenue community about a permanent road layout that could be implemented if a cul-de-sac was retained. This could include street trees, carparking, etc to make the street more residential in look and feel.
  - A reseal of Links Ave to increase the longevity of the road and remove existing markings

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